

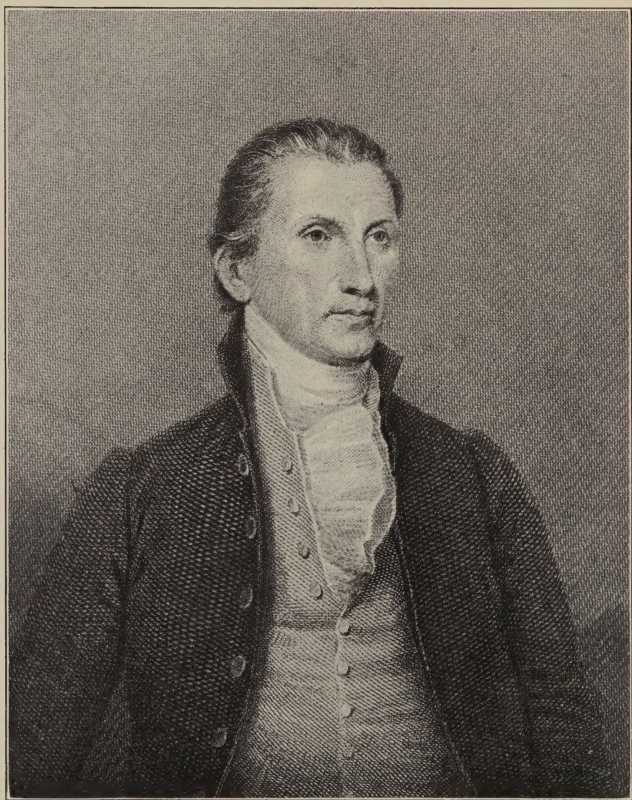
Diplomatic Portraits



By
W. P. Cresson



DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS



JAMES MONROE

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

*Europe and the Monroe Doctrine
One Hundred Years Ago*

BY
W. P. CRESSON

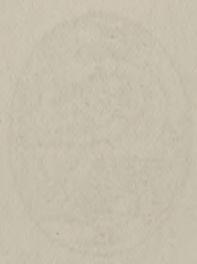
With Illustrations



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
1923

COPYRIGHT, 1923, BY W. P. CRESSON

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED



The Riverside Press

CAMBRIDGE · MASSACHUSETTS

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

TO
MARGARET FRENCH CRESSON
MY WIFE AND HELPMATE

PREFACE

IN a recently published biography of Clara Barton, the author notes as a curious fact the reluctance of American public opinion to support the delegates sent to the Geneva Conference in 1864 to coöperate in the formation of the International Organization of the Red Cross. To bear a hand in the great work of charity and mercy proposed by the conference was, by some strange process of reasoning, considered in the United States as a possible "infringement of the Monroe Doctrine" and a departure from our traditional policy regarding "entangling foreign alliances."

Such strange intensity of national prejudice can be explained only by considering the historical background. International "idealism" is not a monopoly of our own generation. Just one hundred years ago (the centennial of Monroe's great Message to Congress marks the day) the United States had its first real experience of the drawbacks and benefits of "concerted" European action. The outcome of the "System," which resulted from the debates of the Congress of Vienna, was a disappointment to liberal opinion in America as well as in Europe. The menace to American institutions, which developed from an

PREFACE

application of the principles of "European solidarity" upheld by the group of reactionary Powers known as the "Holy Alliance," goes far toward explaining our tendency toward national "isolation." The "un-reasoning antipathy" toward a closer connection with trans-Atlantic affairs (against which the statesmen of Europe protest, often so reasonably, at the present day) is only understandable when viewed in the light of past experience.

The group of world statesmen who appear in these pages belong to an era of history which shows a curious affinity to our own. The period of international adjustment which followed the Napoleonic Wars was a Golden Age of Diplomacy. The reunions held under the terms of the treaties constituting the "System of 1815" gave a wide scope to personality and the arts of persuasion. Not until the recent World War and its ensuing period of "reconstruction" has another such opportunity been offered for a reasonably combined international policy.

In the series of sketches which follow I have tried to point out the significance of certain individuals in relation to the events of their time rather than to define personalities. These "Portraits" generally attempt to depict historical contemporaries. The only sequence, therefore, depends upon the order of the principal events considered in connection with each character. (Many of the latter, indeed, inevitably

PREFACE

appear again and again as subordinate figures in new groupings, and are often kept with difficulty in the second plane.) In reviewing the lives of these international figures of a hundred years ago, I have tried simultaneously to develop the story of one of the most significant movements in world history: the more or less conscious attempt to "federate" Europe which occurred during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The consistent ideals of American foreign policy, and the aspirations of our earlier diplomats naturally caused them to view these efforts with sympathetic attention.

In a friendly appreciation of my more fully documented study of "The Holy Alliance: The European Background of the Monroe Doctrine," Baron d'Estournelles de Constant (the great European authority on International Organization) suggested the advisability of expanding this little work to cover the period of our diplomatic contacts with Europe one hundred years ago. The contribution of Monroe, and his great Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, to the world statesmanship of their day, although but barely recognized by their contemporaries, has taken on a new significance in our own time. In including their "portraits" I have attempted to supply a personal background too often lacking in many standard European accounts.

I am indebted to the *North American Review*, the *New York Times* and *Evening Post* — and especially

PREFACE

to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, which republished the work mentioned above in their valuable series of monographs — for permission to reproduce a part of the material contained in these pages.

CONTENTS

I

ALEXANDER I: A TSAR INTERNATIONALIST

The official portrait: "The Conqueror of Napoleon" — The first constructive internationalist — Youthful influences: Catherine the Great: a Byzantine background — His teachers — Laharpe: the philosophy of revolution — Tsar Paul: militarism and madness — Araktcheev: an evil genius — Assassination of the Emperor Paul — A penitent on the throne — Feminine influence: La Narischkine — Czartoryski and the "Young Liberals" — Napoleon: influence on Paul and Alexander — The murder of Enghien — An "International Protest" — In search of an alliance — Pitt and "Novosiltzov's Mission" — A new Diplomatic Programme and its meaning to-day — Coalition — The Holy Roman Emperor — Austerlitz — An omen — The end of a crusade — The shadow of Tilsit — A truce with the Power of Evil and the outcome

1

II

NAPOLEON: THE DIPLOMACY OF IMPERIALISM

Was Napoleon's diplomacy successful? — The vagaries of genius — Napoleon as an internationalist: the retrospections of St. Helena — Napoleon and the Tsar: an imperial dream — Tilsit an imposed alliance — Russia the pivot of diplomacy — Queen Louise — Erfurt — The Grand Army: the beginnings of modern warfare — Alexander is himself again — Internationalism *vs.* Empire — A dream realized — Alexander: "The Arbiter of Europe"

63

III

CASTLEREAGH: THE DIPLOMACY OF RESERVATIONS

Pitt, and Austerlitz — In the "Land of Ire" — Wellington and Castlereagh: the education of a Foreign Minister — The links of the chain — The banker of the Grand Alliance — Castlereagh in France — Chaumont: the charter of European liberty — Castlereagh and Internationalism — "Solidarity" — The "reservations" — "Britain's orbit"

97

CONTENTS

IV

TALLEYRAND: THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA

A retrospect: the Bishop of Autun in America — The "X Y Z Letters" — Talleyrand and Napoleon — The Bourbons' return — Alexander and Internationalism — The Congress of Vienna — A "bamboozled" idealist — Ballroom diplomacy — Talleyrand and Metternich — The formula of Vienna: Legitimacy — Poland and practical idealism — Talleyrand plays trumps — "The Hundred Days" — Richelieu and the Peace of Paris 128

V

MADAME DE KRÜDENER: THE HOLY ALLIANCE

Vienna and "the Fires of Moscow" — The Holy Alliance: an imposed "League of Peace" — Its origin: a political mystery — Misconceptions and an explanation — Baroness de Krüdener — Mysticism and Diplomacy — A Tsar-Idealist 155

VI

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS: THE DIPLOMACY OF ISOLATION

An American family — Diplomacy and "Relations" — The "Adams Tradition" — America at the cross-roads: Russia or Great Britain? — The policy of the Holy Alliance — The United States and the "Federation of Europe" — Adams in London — Adams and Monroe — The reception of the Holy Alliance in the United States — The Peace Society — Early American "Idealism" — Alexander and the United States — Poléтика's mission — Adams and the Senate — The beginnings of isolation 185

VII

GENTZ: THE ERA OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

Gentz: an international "expert" — American studies: an "authority" — Gentz and Metternich — Gentz at Vienna — After Vienna: the Conference System — Carlsbad and Troppau — Alexander and "International Procedure" — The "Minutes" of Laybach 233

VIII

METTERNICH: THE DIPLOMACY OF STABILITY

The education of a master diplomatist — Kaunitz and the "Grand Style" — Metternich and Napoleon: the sword and the pen — Frank-

CONTENTS

fort — Metternich and Alexander — At Vienna — The "conversion of Alexander" — Metternich and the Holy Alliance — The technique of High Diplomacy — Spies, ladies, and liaisons — The Greek Revolution — Alexander in the toils — Metternich and the "Sects" — The "Red Peril" a century ago 258

IX

CHATEAUBRIAND: THE MONROE DOCTRINE

"Memoirs from beyond the Tomb" — Chateaubriand as a writer: as a statesman: the dangers of "amateur diplomacy" — His voyage to America — Chateaubriand at Verona — Alexander makes a convert — The French intervention in Spain — Chateaubriand develops his policy: a Bourbon Empire in South America — Rush and Canning to the rescue — The Constitutional Powers oppose Federated Europe — The Monroe Doctrine and international organization 291

X

JAMES MONROE: A CENTENARY PORTRAIT (1823-1923)

Monroe as a diplomat — His mission to France — Monroe a "Red"? — His vindication — Monroe and Adams — Who wrote the Monroe Message? — The Greek Question one hundred years ago — The first Monroe Message: Intervention or Isolation? — A cycle of history — Monroe and the Tsar Alexander — The Monroe Doctrine *vs.* international action — The last Congress of the Holy Alliance — The end of a Peace League 312

ILLUSTRATIONS

JAMES MONROE	<i>Frontispiece</i>
From an engraving by A. B. Durand after the painting by J. Vanderlyn in the City Hall, New York	
ALEXANDER I	2
From an old French engraving	
NAPOLEON I	64
From the portrait by David	
LORD CASTLEREAGH	98
From an engraving by Nasi after a painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence	
TALLEYRAND	128
From an engraving by Bocourt after a drawing by Mullard	
MME. DE KRÜDENER	156
From an engraving by Nargeot after a drawing by G. Staal	
JOHN QUINCY ADAMS	186
From the portrait by Copley in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston	
FRIEDRICH VON GENTZ	234
From an engraving in <i>Allgemeines Historisches Porträtwerk</i> , nach Auswahl von Dr. Woldemar von Seidlitz, Munich, 1887	
METTERNICH	258
From a lithograph by Ducarme after a drawing by H. Garnier	
FRANÇOIS-RENÉ DE CHATEAUBRIAND	292
From the portrait by Girodet, 1809	

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ADAMS, J. Q., *Memoirs*.
American Statesmen Series.

BAUSSET, L. F. J. DE, *Mémoires de Napoléon*.

BERGASSE, N. (Collected Papers), Anonymous, *A Defender of Old Tradition under the Revolution*.

BOGDANOVITCH, *History of Alexander I and His Time* (in Russian).

BRYCE, JAMES, *The Holy Roman Empire*.

Cambridge Modern History.

CHATEAUBRIAND, *Mémoires d'Outre Tombe*.

CHOISEUL-GOUFFIER, COMTESSE DE, *Histoire d'Alexandre I^{er}*.

CLELAND, *Early Sentiment for Annexation in California*.

CLÉRY, ROBINET DE, *Gentz*.

COMPAN, MADAME DE, *Mémoires*.

CORWIN, *French Policy and the American Alliance*.

CRESSON, W. P., *The Cossacks: Their History and Country*.

*The Holy Alliance: The European Background of the
Monroe Doctrine*.

CRETENAU-JOLI, *Histoire des Traités de 1815*.

CZARTORYSKI, *Memoirs*.

DEBIDOUR, A., *Histoire Diplomatique de l'Europe*.

DUNNING, W. A., *The Political Theories of the German Idealists*.

DUPUIS, CHARLES, *Le Ministère de Talleyrand en 1814*.

EMPAYTAZ, *Notice Respecting Alexander, Emperor of Russia*.

EYNARD, *Madame de Krüdener*.

FISHER, H. A. L., *Bonapartism*.

FORD, WORTHINGTON C., *Adams and the Monroe Doctrine* (Mass. Hist. Soc.).

FOURNIER, A., *Napoleon I: A Biography*.

GARDEN, *Histoire Général des Traités de Paix*.

GOEBEL, JULIUS, *Intervention*.

GOLDER, F. A., *The Russian Offer of Mediation in the War of 1812*.

HILDT, *Early Diplomatic Negotiations of the United States with Russia*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

HOLLAND, LORD, *Reminiscences*.

HOUSSAYE, "1815."

JACKSON, LADY, *The Court of the Tuileries*.

JEFFERSON, THOMAS, *Collected Papers, etc.*

JOSIKA, BARON, *Memoirs*.

JOYNEVILLE, *Life and Times of Alexander I.*

KANT, EMMANUEL, *Perpetual Peace*.

KEYNES, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*.

KORNILOV, ALEXANDER, *Modern Russian History*.

LAGARDE, *The Congress of Vienna*.

LAHARPE, JEAN FRANÇOIS DE, *Correspondance avec le Grand Duc de Russie, maintenant Empereur*.

LANSING, ROBERT, *The Peace Negotiations*.

MADISON, JAMES, *Papers*.

MAISTRE, JOSEPH DE, *Mémoires*.

MALMESBURY, EARL OF, *Diaries*.

MARTENS, VON, *Nouveau Recueil des Traités*.

METTERNICH, *Mémoires*.

MICHAUD, *Dictionnaire de Biographie Universelle*.

MIKHAILOVITCH, GRAND DUKE NICHOLAS, *Alexandre I^{er}: Russian Court Life*.

MOISSON, *Secret Memoirs*.

MONROE, JAMES, *Seventh Annual Message*.

MOORE, J. B., *Digest of International Law*.

Henry Clay and Pan-Americanism.
American Diplomacy.

NEUVILLE, HYDE DE, *Mémoires*.

PASQUIER, *Mémoires*.

PHILLIPS, W. A., *The Confederation of Europe*.
George Canning.

PICARD and TUETOY, *Unpublished Correspondence of Napoleon I.*

POLOVSTOV, *Correspondance Diplomatique des Ambassadeurs et Ministres de France en Russie et de Russie en France 1814 à 1830*.

PRADT, ABBÉ DE, *L'Europe après le Congrès à Aix-la-Chapelle*.

L'Europe et l'Amérique en 1821.

Vrai Système de l'Europe relativement à l'Amérique et la Grèce.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

RAIN, PIERRE, *Alexandre I^{er}: Un Tsar-Idéologue.*

RAMBAUD, ALFRED, *History of Russia.*

REDDAWAY, W. F., *The Monroe Doctrine.*

ROUSSEAU, J. J., *Œuvres Complètes.*

SCHALCK DE LA FAVERIE, A., *Napoléon et les Etats Unis.*

SCHNITZLER, *Secret History of Russia.*

SCHUYLER, *American Diplomacy.*

SCOTT, JAMES BROWN, *Cases in International Law.*

SHEPHERD, WILLIAM R., *Latin America.*

SOREL, ALBERT, *L'Europe et la Révolution Française.*

STAPLETON, *Life of Canning.*

SLOANE, W. M., *Napoleon Bonaparte: A History.*

TALLEYRAND, *Mémoires.*

TATICHEV, *Alexandre et Napoléon.*

THIERS, A., *History of the Consulate and Empire of Napoleon.*

TREITSCHKE, *History of Germany in the Nineteenth Century.*

VANDAL, *Napoléon et Alexandre I.*

VILLANUEVA, *La Monarquía en América.*

WALEZEWSKI, *Paul I^{er} le Fils de la Grande Catherine.*

WALLACE, W. K., *The Trend of History.*

WASHINGTON, GEORGE, *Official Papers.*

WEILL, *La Campagne de 1814.*

WHEATON, *Elements of International Law.*

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

I

ALEXANDER I: A TSAR INTERNATIONALIST

I

BREAKING the silence of the long northern night of December 12, 1777, the roar of an imperial salute announced to St. Petersburg the birth of a future Tsar. The child who was to become the conqueror of Napoleon — the author of the strange League of Peace known as the “Holy Alliance” — was, even in his cradle, the embodiment of a cause. In the little person of the Grand Duke Alexander were centered the hopes of all who desired to see perpetuated the glories of the Great Catherine’s reign. The birth of the Empress’s grandson seemed to remove — or at least to render more remote — the danger that her immediate heir might succeed to the throne.

In the broad square before the palace a dark multitude of peasants and townspeople sank to their knees in the snow to send up thankful prayers. Motley groups of palace courtiers drunkenly embraced one another in a frenzy of self-congratulation. An immense relief pervaded all classes. The morose and unpopular Tsarevitch Paul — with his threatening “reforms” and his terrifying ugliness — was now

I

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

felt to be thrust into the background. Even in his swaddling clothes it was Alexander's inevitable fate to represent to those who surrounded him a bright Symbol of Promise.

Along the endless corridors of the Winter Palace — through vast apartments wherein German taste and Russian prodigality had thought to realize a conception of Byzantine magnificence — a jubilant procession bore the child to the Empress's apartments. By her orders its father was scarcely afforded time to glance at the little heir whose arrival had so complicated the difficulties of his own position. In the ceremonies that ensued, he played the part of an undesired and unhonored guest. But the bitterest blow of all was the Empress's refusal to accept her son's advice concerning the new grand ducal household. Paul was a politician even in his son's nursery.

The celebrations in honor of the christening were of unparalleled magnificence. Potemkin, the shameless favorite who from the folds of Catherine's skirts ruled Russia as Prime Minister, gave an entertainment costing more than fifty thousand rubles. A few days later — as the English Minister reports — the Tsarina's table "at supper was set out with jewels to the amount of upwards of two million pounds."¹ Anxious to please the Semiramis of the North, whose prestige throughout Europe was at its height, the foreign embassies at St. Petersburg vied with each

¹ Malmesbury.



ALEXANDER I

ALEXANDER I

other in expensive presents and compliments, filling their dispatches with conjectures concerning the health and prospects of the new arrival.

A few days after Alexander's birth, in spite of tears and entreaties, the child was definitely removed from the care of its mother. "To stop her crying," the Tsarina sent a present of "a few thousand rubles." The numerous suite of nurses and governesses (besides a host of the less essential officials required by the semi-Oriental etiquette of the Russian Court) were lodged in an improvised nursery next to the bedchamber occupied by the Sovereign. Even in his cradle the little Grand Duke was treated by Catherine as the direct heir to her throne. The birth of a brother more than a year later (1779) was welcomed as a further step toward the achievement of the splendid ambitions she cherished for her adopted country. To Alexander was reserved the Empire of Europe. To the younger prince was given the prophetic name of Constantine, recalling the traditional designs of the Romanovs to succeed to the Empire of Byzantium, and Catherine's intention of creating a new Vice-Royalty of the East.

Paul and his consort, further to remove them from the neighborhood of their children, were soon sent on a "Grand Tour" of Europe. As a proof of the Tsar-evitch's tact, he is reported to have asked the Queen of France how she treated Mme. du Barry, and shocked the courtiers of the French Court by his

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

open references to his quarrel with his mother, the Empress.

All unconscious of the intrigues which centered about them, the early childhood of the Imperial Princes passed happily enough. They were petted and cherished by their despotic Sovereign and grandparent, who regulated the whole conduct of their household. To this task she brought the same attention to detail which had reformed every administrative department of the Russian Empire. Catherine's career as a grandmother is, indeed, one of the most pleasing historical memories of this extraordinary Empress — usually so masculine in her mind and methods. The cares of statecraft and her less creditable diversions were set aside. When Alexander was but four years old, she writes exultingly to Grimm, her correspondent and unofficial representative in Paris:

The Lord only knows what the eldest has come to already. He models, he draws, he writes, he rides horseback and fences, his imagination is extraordinary and he asks questions without end. The other day he desired to be informed whence he came and why he was placed upon this earth. There is a singular depth and conciseness in the ideas which turn in the head of this youngster. With it all, he is always gay. Moreover, I never attempt to force him to any serious application. He does as he pleases and he is only restrained from hurting the feelings of others.

But such a régime might readily spoil even the most gracious of little Princes. When Countess

ALEXANDER I

Benckendorf, the governess of the young Grand Dukes, died, in 1783, Catherine decided that a man should henceforth become director of their household. For this post she chose Prince Soltikov, whose talents and faults were intimately known to her. This pliant courtier, after a brief reign as "favorite," had presented to the Empress's notice the famous Platon Zoubov, who had definitely displaced the all-powerful Potemkin in her affections. Besides the friendship of Zoubov, another reason commended Soltikov in Catherine's eyes: the fact that, when Grand Master of the Court of the Grand Duke Paul, he had been dismissed by the latter after a violent quarrel.

Catherine, however, had no illusions with respect to the pedagogical talents of Count Soltikov, or of Protasov, his assistant. While giving over the general direction of the future Tsar's household to Russians — thus ensuring the sympathy of the reactionary society of St. Petersburg — she cast about for a foreign professor with "solid learning." She planned to develop the minds of her young charges along the lines congenial to her own powerful intellect. On May 17, 1784, she furnished Soltikov with a long "Memorandum of Instructions," setting forth in elaborate detail the programme of studies which Alexander and his brother were to follow. At the same time she announced that the tutor charged with carrying out this carefully prepared plan had

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

also been chosen: an almost unknown young man, Frédéric César de Laharpe.

To this high-minded if somewhat priggish Swiss was to fall the task of directing the earlier education of the future "Tsar-Idealist." Brought to Russia to act as guardian for the scapegrace brother of Count Lanskoï (one of the ignoble procession of Catherine's "minor favorites" whom Potemkin cynically refused to honor "even with his jealousy"), Laharpe was, instead, to impress upon the pliant mind of the heir of Peter the Great those first lessons of philosophic liberalism which were to yield such promising results at a later day. As the earliest guide and inspiration of the first European monarch who ever attempted to bring into the field of practical diplomacy the internationalist ideals of Sully and the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, Laharpe played an important if somewhat accidental rôle in the history of his time. The enigmatic figure of Alexander I (looming with new significance in the light of the events of our own time) can be understood only through a consideration of the sharply contending influences for good and evil that surrounded his youth.

Laharpe was an avowed Republican, strongly influenced by Voltaire in his youth. He was, of course, an enthusiastic disciple of M. Rousseau and his educational theories. Strangely enough, none of these qualities were likely at this time to injure his prestige in the eyes of the autocratic Catherine. At a later

ALEXANDER I

date, when the excesses of the French Revolution had disillusioned the Empress, the fashionable approval of liberalism, which she shared with the aristocratic salons of Paris, changed to a violent hatred of all that even remotely suggested "Jacobinism." But until 1789 Catherine, who conscientiously believed herself a "reformer," saw no contradiction in choosing for tutor to the heir of the absolute Tsars, a man of Laharpe's ultra-liberal convictions.

From the beginning, the young master and his pupils appear to have been charmed with each other. Laharpe was, happily, filled with youthful enthusiasm for his task. He recognized the importance and responsibility of his position, and in order to fulfill his mission to the best purpose asked for and soon obtained the entire direction of the education of the young Grand Dukes. History and a pleasant philosophical interpretation of the events it records was their favorite method of study. Of the progress of his young charges, Laharpe soon wrote with pride to his friends in Paris:

In talking with them of primitive society, I always insist in true Republican fashion on their own real equality with their subjects. Showing them as a first example the primitive tribal chief, clad in tiger skins and seated upon a log or stone in some log cabin, I next exhibit the same man, who, ceasing to believe himself the equal of his fellows, has become their King!... Thus do men, by believing in their own right to lift themselves high above their former comrades, profit by

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

the negligence of the latter to make good their claim! This is the doctrine I have insisted upon with my pupils, a strange doctrine indeed for their consideration, but one which they recognize nevertheless to be true.

The young master also reports that "the scientific education of the Grand Dukes is well advanced. . . . Alexander, besides arithmetical calculation, understands logarithms and is able to solve equations of the first degree." There was, indeed, a curious mixture of the system of Rousseau and his own good-natured genius in the educational methods followed by Laharpe. These included a system of copy-books, known as the "Archives of Shame," in which both Alexander and Constantine were obliged to confess their faults at length and to analyze the reasons for their just punishments. Constantine on one occasion signs himself "The Ass Constantine."

The future ruler, whose realm comprised people of so many nationalities, was encouraged to develop his natural talent for the languages. He was soon able to speak German and "to express his thoughts in English with some facility." He was also fitted to speak with correctness and some eloquence his own Russian tongue, a talent not always met with among his compatriots.

Besides Laharpe, Catherine chose also the other "governors" and minor teachers who surrounded the young Grand Dukes: Kraft taught them experimental

ALEXANDER I

physics and what was classified as "science"; Pallas taught them botany and took them on long, rambling excursions near Pavlovsk; Masson taught them mathematics. All these men, as was then customary, were of foreign origin. But regarding matters essentially Russian, Catherine determined that the Princes should remain under the control of their own compatriots. Muraviev taught them a glorified version of Russian history and "moral philosophy," while their religious education was placed in the hands of their confessor, Father Samborski.¹ If Alexander became in after life, as was frequently charged, "more European than Russian," this excess of internationalism cannot be laid to the account of his grandmother's famous educational programme.

II

ALEXANDER'S docility as a pupil foreshadowed the pliant and "suggestionable" character which he developed in after life. He was as precocious as a young Oriental, and appears to have become ardently attached to all those who were able to "add to the store of his knowledge." Unlike his brother, he sought the society of his masters and "preferred their company to games and amusements." If this was true even of Soltikov, "a narrow-minded and characterless person, the target of the Court's witticisms,"¹ it is not surprising to find him lavishing an affection almost

¹ Bogdanovich.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

filial upon the far more brilliant and attractive Laharpe. The passion for political intrigue which later characterized Alexander's career may be traced to this not wholly fortunate association — and the lack of more suitable amusements during his childhood.

Laharpe was, however, hampered in his duties by the jealousies and suspicion of his colleagues. A correspondence which he maintained with his cousin, General Laharpe, in Paris, served as an excuse to bring his supposed revolutionary tendencies to the attention of the Empress. Partly in a teasing mood, yet partly in earnest, she taxed him openly with being a "Jacobin." Laharpe's dignified rejoinder postponed the inevitable issue. He was a Republican, he admitted, and openly favored that form of government. "I advised my Canton to obtain its rights in a rightful way; that is not revolution. But in carrying out my task I owe respect to your government and will try to bring up the Grand Dukes according to your own traditions." Catherine's reply was to the effect that, even in Russia, "so *honest* a man might be a Jacobin if he saw fit."¹ That a doctrine — whether liberal or reactionary — was not the most suitable person to have entire control of the Grand Dukes' education seems to have escaped her attention.

In 1791, when Alexander was barely fourteen, the Empress Catherine decided to find a bride for her

¹ Bogdanovich

ALEXANDER I

young heir-presumptive. The importance of assuring the succession in the direct line was evident. Moreover, she impatiently awaited the moment when it would be possible to give the Grand Duke a separate position at Court. She took a malicious pleasure in increasing his prestige at the expense of his father's. Count Roumianzov (another courtier belonging to the "personal circle" of those who had enjoyed her intimate favors!) was chosen for this delicate diplomatic mission. He was ordered to undertake a tour of those minor capitals of Germany where princesses fulfilling Catherine's chief requirements — good birth and perfect health — were bred to the "calling of Empress." In the petty court of the Grand Duchy of Baden (in much the same fashion that the Great Empress had herself been "discovered" in Anhalt and brought to Russia to become the bride of Peter III), Roumianzov found a suitable *parti*. This was the Princess Louisa Augusta, the third daughter of the reigning Grand Duke. The portrait which her envoy forwarded to the Tsarina, together with his report, met with favor. The Princess Louisa and her sister (the latter in order to leave a semblance of choice to Alexander) were invited to St. Petersburg. The plight of the two little girls must have reminded the great Empress of her own first appearance at the Russian Court. The former "Princess Figchen" took the newly arrived pair under her special protection. Louisa herself, in the charming diary which has been

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

preserved to us, tells of her first meeting with her future husband: "I looked at him as carefully as politeness permitted. I thought him quite handsome, but not as ravishing as I had been led to believe. He came toward me with a somewhat hostile air and took my hand. During the whole evening he hardly said a word to me, and seemed anxious to avoid my company."

For six weeks Alexander's courtship progressed but slowly. The Princess's position was becoming embarrassing when one night the Grand Duke slipped a letter into her hand containing his proposal. "He told me," writes Louisa, "that he was authorized by his parents to tell me of his love and asked whether I believed that our marriage would bring happiness. I answered him in the same tone, on a scrap of paper, that my family had sent me to St. Petersburg hoping for our alliance, and I was wholly disposed to follow their wishes. From that time we were looked upon as an engaged couple."

The ceremony of their betrothal took place in the midst of festivities. The courtiers, to please Catherine, insisted upon the "romantic" circumstances of the match, and the docile Alexander began actually to believe himself "in love." The future bridegroom was aged eighteen and his fiancée was sixteen.

Their marriage took place in September, 1793. On the occasion of her "conversion" to the Russian Orthodox faith, the Princess took the name of Eliza-

ALEXANDER I

beth. This somewhat artificial idyl was not to continue long uninterrupted. But during these earlier days of married bliss the foundations were laid for a long "understanding" to which the much-tried Elizabeth brought as her share patience and a just appreciation both of her husband's qualities and of his shortcomings.

Their engagement and marriage scarcely interrupted the even tenor of the pleasant philosophical discourses which had become the conventional form of the "instruction" which Laharpe now gave *en famille* to the Grand Ducal pair. Elizabeth shared her husband's interest in liberal theories which the young tutor presented in such attractive guise. She became the confidante of all Alexander's projects of "reform." For even at this period of his career the future "Tsar-Idealist" had developed that passion for bettering the universe—or at least that part of it he was called upon to rule—which was to mark the history of his reign.

Meanwhile, in the outer world events of startling import had taken place. The execution of Louis XVI had thrown its shadow over the celebrations planned in honor of Alexander's betrothal, and the tragic end of Marie Antoinette almost coincided with his marriage. The thin veneer of dilettante Liberalism which the Empress Catherine's whim had imposed upon the most autocratic of courts was quickly worn through in the face of these political catastrophes.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

"All that the Empress a short time before had found original and curious, she now discovered to be suspicious and subversive."¹

The conservative "Old Russian" circles of Catherine's favorites had never ceased to regard Laharpe's liberalism with suspicion and aversion. Moreover, a wholly contrary foreign influence now began to make itself felt in the reactionary circles of the Russian capital: that of the French émigrés fleeing from the red "Terror" that ruled on the banks of the Seine. The tales of wrong and horror brought to the Empress by these aristocratic victims turned Catherine's philosophic tolerance of revolutionary "ideals" to a violent hatred of everything which might suggest "Jacobinism." She lent a willing ear to the denunciations — heard on all sides — of the pernicious "Republican" influences to which the heir of Peter the Great was being subjected. The Tsarevitch Paul (who, as a leader of the Anti-Revolutionary Party at the Court, began to take a place long denied to him in the political life of the capital) now even dared to assert his rights as a father to direct the education of his son.

In 1794 — the year of Thermidor — the question of Laharpe's "unsuitability" came to a climax. Through Soltikov the Empress abruptly gave her grandson's tutor to understand that his services were no longer "desirable." In the midst of a hard Russian

¹ Rain.

ALEXANDER I

winter, he was ordered to set out without delay for the frontier. From his writings we learn that another source of complaint (somewhat inappropriate in a stern Republican) was the fact that this dismissal was signified to him "without rank or cross," or, indeed, any of the distinctions usually accorded a royal tutor who had completed his task. In answer to his protest, a pension of nine hundred and twenty-five rubles was finally offered him, and the eminently Russian rank of "Civil Colonel." Through the intervention of his pupil he also obtained a postponement of his enforced departure until May, 1795.

During the respite afforded by this unexpected delay, Laharpe sought to complete his work. His "revenge" lay in impressing anew upon the receptive mind of Alexander the lessons of liberal Republicanism which had fired the imagination of the future autocrat. The Grand Duke was now his disciple rather than his pupil. He alone could sway the curious mixture of yielding gentleness and stubborn opposition which even at this early age were so strangely mingled in Alexander's character. An event connected with his departure shows to what extent the influence of his teachings was recognized and admitted by Catherine herself.

During the last months of Laharpe's stay, she was brought to seek his aid in forwarding her long-cherished plan of setting aside the order of succession; naming Alexander as the direct heir to the throne to

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

the exclusion of his father, the Tsarevitch.¹ Alexander's acquiescence was necessary to carry out such a project, and the approval of his tutor would probably have been decisive. Laharpe, however, pretended to misunderstand the evident tendency of the proposals made to him. Common prudence dictated that any share in the Byzantine intrigues of the Russian Court was highly dangerous, a matter in which no European could become involved with any degree of safety or honor.

The grief and resentment of Alexander after the departure of his preceptor were manifested publicly and without reserve. "He was heard to declare himself with unmeasured harshness respecting his grandmother's actions, using terms of almost inconceivable abuse."²

When the moment of separation arrived (May 9, 1795), he sent Laharpe his portrait accompanied by a letter filled with expressions of almost dramatic intensity: "Farewell, my dear friend; what sorrow these words cause me! Always remember that you have left behind you in Russia a man whose debt toward you is beyond mere words of thanks; who owes you everything, except his very life. I can scarcely see what I write through my tears."

It has been possible only decently to hint at the background against which we must view the idyls of Alexander's education and marriage. The Court of

¹ Rain.

² Czartoryski.

ALEXANDER I

which Catherine was the crowning glory and pattern was the most dissolute in Europe. Even at a time when the cherished ambition of the petty rulers of Germany was to imitate as closely as possible the polite manners of Versailles and the "private life" of the *Parc aux Cerfs*, the foreign Ministers at St. Petersburg were shocked at the brutal license that prevailed. The Tsarina's determination to educate her grandsons in the tenets of "liberal" philosophy only lasted while "liberalism" remained fashionable in the Paris salons. It was largely a matter of chance that the highly respectable Laharpe had controlled the education of Alexander rather than some Russian courtier who would have played the ignoble part of pander to his imperial pupil. Certain court chroniclers rather cynically suggest that the grandmother was not a little amused and disconcerted by the priggish behavior of her future successor, and even took "measures to render him less *naïve*." Nevertheless Laharpe's influence and that of the tender young Grand Duchess Elizabeth tended to keep Alexander in admiration of the chaste virtues of the heroes of the Roman Republic.

Laharpe's successor in the rôle of friend and confidant was by another fortunate chance almost as high-minded and disinterested, if not as morally inclined as the Calvinist-bred Laharpe. Prince Adam Czartoryski was a young Pole of high lineage who had been brought to the Russian Court as a hostage and guar-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

antee for the loyal behavior of his important family connection. The young Grand Duke found him a companion near his own age capable of sharing in a measure the ideals of international good-will and liberal reform borrowed from the doctrinaire Republican philosophers so admired by the absent master. The "Memoirs" which Czartoryski subsequently wrote are a most interesting source of historical material, with respect to the influences which surrounded Alexander's youth and his early reign as Tsar. In spite of the continual disillusion he experienced — both in his personal and political relations with his Sovereign — he remained to the end a devoted, forgiving friend, and an understanding biographer. His comments now permit us to judge of the wide separation between theoretical intention and possible achievement, which was the tragical cause of so many shortcomings in Alexander's career.

Czartoryski succeeds in surrounding the figure of the future Autocrat (who, through the circumstances of the enormous forces centralized in his person, became at many important junctures the foremost international figure of his time) with something of the individual charm which Alexander seems to have exercised upon all with whom he came into personal contact. In spite of a variable and uneven temper, at times amounting to fickleness and disloyalty, this quality seems to have ensured to Alexander an almost pathetic degree of personal devotion. Many possess-

ALEXANDER I

ing far stronger natures than his own — friends and dependents whom he used only to thrust aside in favor of new oracles and new favorites — followed his star with loyalty and affection. During the important period when Alexander had been deprived of the counsel and control of Laharpe, Czartoryski, in spite of his youth, in a measure took his place. “The Grand Duke,” he writes, “was living from now on without any fixed educational programme, no studies were recommended to him. . . . I proposed to him that he should read certain works relating to history, legislation, and politics. Alexander realized the utility of this advice, and would have liked to follow it. But Court life made such occupations difficult. . . . At this time *the Grand Duke never read a single book from end to end*. I do not believe he could have done so later when the weight of despotic government fell upon him. . . . Nature must indeed have endowed him with faculties far beyond the ordinary, for in spite of the education he received he became the most amiable sovereign of his century, the conqueror of Napoleon.”¹

In summarizing the general results of Laharpe’s educational influence, Czartoryski adds the following appreciations:

“The Grand Duke obtained from his teachings only a very superficial learning, never any thorough, positive, or complete notions.” He was inspired

¹ Czartoryski.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

“with a great enthusiasm and love for humanity”—and even for “Justice, Equality, and Liberty”—in the *abstract*. The “contrary influences”—which solicited him on every side through “old prejudices, bad examples and flattery”—were prevented from destroying these noble instincts. To have inspired and developed in a Russian Grand Duke such great sentiments are, he maintained, “to the credit of M. de Laharpe.” Yet his final criticism is an indictment of failure: “These salutary principles were only fixed in Alexander’s mind in the form of generalities. It does not appear that this teacher ever told him to reflect concerning the difficulties of putting them in practice, or with respect to the science of obtaining *possible* results.”

The void left by the departure of Laharpe was never more than partially filled. In the society of Czartoryski and another young “Republican” of high lineage, Kouchoubey (a nephew of the famous Russian General, Count Bedzeberodko), Alexander sought only to model his conduct upon lines which he fancied would have been pleasing to his beloved master. When Kouchoubey was parted from his imperial friend by a diplomatic mission at Constantinople, Alexander eagerly seized the opportunity to address through him the following startling communication to Laharpe. This letter throws a strange light on the vagaries and hesitations of a character upon which so many hopes were founded:

ALEXANDER I

I find myself neither suited to the position I now occupy nor to that which I am some day to be called upon to fill, and have sworn to alter my fate in one way or another. This, my dear friend, is the secret I have for some time longed to refer to your judgment. . . . Affairs here are in a frightful disorder: robbery and corruption on all sides; the provinces misgoverned and public order banished from an empire which, regardless of all else, continues to widen its boundaries. How is it possible that any single individual can govern here, or alone correct such abuses! It would be impossible, not only for a man of ordinary capability like myself, but even for a genius. One of my dearest principles has always been never to undertake a task which one is certain not to be able to carry out.

In other letters he speaks of his determination to establish himself with his young wife on the shores of the Rhine, in some spot where he can live quietly "in the society of friends and the study of nature," or even of emigrating to what was then the haven of oppressed liberalism everywhere — America.¹

Czartoryski, seven years the senior of his friend, seems from the beginning to have judged correctly of the limits of Alexander's intention to abdicate his imperial rights. He also reluctantly concluded that but few practical plans could be based upon the "liberalism" which directed all Alexander's ambition. These he considered "only the pale reflections of Laharpe's teaching." He was, however, too much engaged in directing all these immature impulses to the future benefit of his own unfortunate country —

¹ Pouchkin.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Poland — to undeceive his friend. In following this policy, he constantly brought to Alexander's attention the condition of affairs then distracting the ancient "Republic," presenting its policy (with no little violence to the truth) in the classical guise of the old Commonwealths of Greece and Rome. This programme fitted admirably Alexander's "opinions," "those of a student of the year '89, who would like to see Republics existing everywhere."

Czartoryski had few illusions even in these early days regarding the true character of Alexander's ability, were he called upon to exercise actual power, to resist the reactionary Russian influences that surrounded him. The picturesque silhouettes of the fortresses of Saint Peter and Saint Paul which met his gaze whenever the two comrades walked arm in arm along the quays of the Neva presented a constant reminder of the "dark forces" ever threatening his own fortunes and liberty. Nevertheless, he continued to kindle Alexander's generous dreams of "international right," his indignation at Poland's wrongs, and his secret glorification of Kosciusko, the Polish patriot.

The Empress Catherine's feminine passion for drawing political advantage from even the smallest events was flattered by the hope that from the friendship of these young men might grow up a useful understanding. The influential Polish connection of the Czartoryski family might thus be won for the Russian Government. Needless to say, the real basis

ALEXANDER I

of their friendship was jealously hidden from the Empress and her circle. The conversations between Alexander, Czartoryski, and the other young liberals who now became his chosen friends, could only have filled the "favorites" of Catherine's intimate circle with mirthful suspicion.

These plans for Alexander's future reign, were already "international" in their character. The future author of the "Holy Alliance," perhaps first fired by the wrongs of Poland, dreamed of a new system of "World Order," a "Council of Nations," ruled by the philosophic maxims of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre¹ and M. Rousseau. The delightfully subversive theories of the early German "Idealists" were propounded — and discussed. The "brotherhood of mankind" became a reality. The conversations of Alexander and his boy courtiers were, indeed, "a generous conspiracy" against all the "deadening influences" to which the Grand Duke was subjected. "The idea that all this was going on under the very nose of a Court steeped in the prejudices of Absolutism, and of Ministers filled with the idea of their own infallibility, added a secret interest to our relations which made them but the more friendly and intimate."²

III

CZARTORYSKI has left a striking picture of the catastrophic effect of the Great Catherine's death upon all

¹ Mme. de Choiseul-Gouffier.

² Czartoryski.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

who surrounded her. The minor satellite Courts — those of the Tsarevitch Paul and the “Young Court” of the Grand Duke Alexander — immediately found their relations suddenly changed. All those who had obtained the fickle favor of Paul immediately became exalted in their pretensions. The very fact that Catherine’s favor had been so openly shown to those forming the *entourage* of her grandchildren became a source of anxiety and reproach. The latter’s boyish plottings became a dangerous pastime.

The stroke of apoplexy which carried off the great Empress (1796) had been wholly unexpected. Platon Zoubov, openly treated with the dignity of a consort, took upon himself the duty of announcing the news of the Tsarina’s inevitable death to the heir-apparent in his exile at Gatchina. “Never at the sound of a stage-manager’s whistle did a more complete change of scenario occur than that which followed the accession of Paul I. Everything in St. Petersburg changed in the course of a day — costumes, manners, expressions, occupations. The Prussian cut of uniform affected by Paul’s army of Gatchina was inexorably insisted upon.”¹

The new Tsar, “at forty-two looked ten years older, bald and wrinkled,” with “something unearthly in his leaden complexion and large glaring eyes.” He thought his own face “too ugly to be impressed on the coinage.”²

¹ Czartoryski.

² Joyneville.

ALEXANDER I

The first months of his reign inaugurated, as Catherine's courtiers had anticipated, a whole series of incongruous reforms and punishments. Favors were showered in the most unexpected places, and sentences of exile to Siberia or to Europe were distributed with an equally lavish hand. Until the age of forty-two, Paul had been forbidden all part in the affairs of State — the most galling position imaginable for an egotist cherishing illusions of statesmanship. He now set himself to the task of undoing every act of Catherine's policy which could safely be nullified, substituting for her imperial policy his own unbridled Will.

To add prestige to the Tsarist authority, "Old Russian" Court usages, abolished by Peter the Great, were revived. In the streets traffic was brought to a standstill when the royal sleigh appeared. Men and women were forced to kneel like Asiatics in the deep snow and mud to honor the passing Autocrat!

The garrison of the capital, composed of Catherine's victorious guards, was replaced by Paul's favorite "Gatchina troops." These battalions (with whose drill he had been allowed to amuse himself during his exile from the Court, much as a child might play with a box of leaden soldiers) wore the uniform of Frederick the Great and appeared more than half foreign in the eyes of the inhabitants of the capital. Prussian drilled "patterns" from their ranks were distributed among the older regiments. Old soldiers of the armies

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

which had conquered the Turks began their soldiering anew. "One soon saw on every hand the old officers asking for their retirement, or else obliged to submit to the commands of peasant drill-sergeants, whose names no one had ever heard before."¹ Fortunately, history seems to show that the Russian national character is rebellious to Germanization. Souvarov, the greatest of Russian generals, the only military genius capable of meeting Napoleon's marshals on equal terms, remained Russian in science and tactics to the end of his triumphant career. His victories — which Paul's German mania could scarcely pardon or understand — were the outstanding glories of this monarch's brief reign. Nevertheless, the Marshal's contempt for foreign military practices earned for him several months of disagreeable exile as punishment for a little poem, wherein the virtues of German "Whig powder" were compared disadvantageously with those of gunpowder, in their connection with drill and tactics.

The new Tsarevitch — Alexander — found in the vigorous parade-ground routine which, at his father's command, now engrossed his time, a not unhealthy contrast to the philosophical discourses with which M. Laharpe had obsessed him. The impression which Paul's character and actions left upon his son during this period of their renewed relationship must be noted in considering the character development of the future author of the "Holy Alliance."

¹ Czartoryski.

ALEXANDER I

In spite of a striking physical dissimilarity, there is a curious resemblance between the two Autocrats — father and son.¹ Both Tsars were afflicted with the same tendency to act upon generous impulses marred by morbid egotism. Both were obsessed by the same restless zeal for governmental reform accompanied by an equal disregard of the prejudices of those most likely to profit by their acts. A wholly false conception of the true relationship between monarchs and their subjects — and above all an unwavering belief in the high-mindedness of their own motives — led them both to perform the most astounding and contradictory acts, and to adopt policies which they carried through with a ruthless conviction that marred their benevolence. Paul's determination to recover the influence denied to him by Catherine over his son's education and character was natural and laudable.

The Grand Dukes Alexander and Constantine were summoned to the colors and became part of the military machine to whose perfection the new Tsar devoted most of his morbid energy. The Tsarevitch was soon named a Colonel in the Semenovski Regiment, and a little later Inspector of the Garrison of St. Petersburg. Nor were these military duties merely honorary appointments. Alexander's whole time was taken up in drilling recruits and other "military drudgery" concerning the details of which Paul ques-

¹ Joyneville.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

tioned him rigorously morning and night. It was at this period that Araktcheev, the sinister favorite of Alexander's later years, already high in Paul's favor, first makes his appearance. The embodiment of discipline and organization, he was able in his office of aide-de-camp to be of great assistance to Alexander during this period of his military studies. Through Araktcheev, Alexander also became familiar with the less creditable side of garrison life, and the Grand Duchess Elizabeth had reason to complain bitterly, in letters to her mother, of this new intimacy — and of its effect upon her young husband.

IV

CZARTORYSKI, in his "Memoirs," tells of his efforts to surround the young heir-apparent with more sympathetic and profitable influences than Araktcheev's circle of garrison "blades." With this unselfish end in view, he asked leave to present to his patron new friends, who, without being patterns of moral conduct, were at least men of education and breeding. Novosiltzov and young Count Stroganov, the nucleus of the celebrated "Secret Committee," were presented to Alexander during the Tsar Paul's coronation at Moscow. Novosiltzov, an older man, who had already some experience of public life, immediately showed himself conscious of the advantages of such a connection. Czartoryski was not over-pleased to find that he had "prepared in Russian the translation of a

ALEXANDER I

French work filled with good advice for a young Prince about to mount the throne." This was read by Alexander with characteristic "attention and satisfaction." Yet under these new influences (as Czartoryski joyfully notes in his "Memoirs") the philosophic and idealistic side of the Tsarevitch's character recovered its ascendancy.

These new friendships brought Alexander into renewed contact with the political philosophy of the French Revolution. Stroganov was a pupil of Romme and a disciple of Rousseau. He had visited Paris during the Terror and had listened to the dangerous eloquence of the Jacobin Clubs. Novosiltzov, sent to Paris by the elder Count Stroganov to rescue the aristocratic young liberal from this dangerous atmosphere, had himself become infected with the intoxication of "liberty and equality," returning to Russia almost as great a "revolutionary" as his ward. In the company of these more traveled compatriots, Alexander heard reëchoed the lesson of Laharpe and harkened once more to the voice of the Goddess who had triumphed on the banks of the Seine.

In a long letter (dated Gatchina, October 8, 1797) Alexander exposed to his old teacher his own "liberal" dissatisfaction with the government which his father had established:¹ "The Agriculturalists are harassed, commerce is upset, personal rights are destroyed; such is the state of Russia. The one hope for

¹ Rain.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

the future lies in a Free Constitution." He then proceeds to expose his plans and hopes for bringing about this "much-to-be-desired reform" and the fashion in which the "Young Liberals Circle" was to make itself felt: While awaiting his own accession, a conservative programme of propaganda was planned for the enlightenment of "public opinion." Suitable books were already chosen for translation into Russian — at first "only those for which official approval could be obtained." The "Young Liberals" hoped that the minds of Alexander's future subjects would thus be slowly prepared for those measures of reform to which they already looked forward — the crowning achievement of the coming reign. "How happy I could be were you only by my side at this moment," Alexander writes enthusiastically to his old master. And Laharpe, filled with honest pride concerning his share in the education of so generous a prince, wrote interminably long letters in reply, filled with the classical allusions and philosophical advice of a confirmed doctrinaire of the Republican era. Scores of these were found unopened in the secret archives after Alexander's death. The Tsarevitch was already outgrowing Laharpe.

V

BUT while the young Tsarevitch and his companions were busying themselves with harmless theoretical problems of internal reform, tragedy was at hand.

ALEXANDER I

Events were fast maturing which were to bring Alexander face to face with the stern realities that beset the ruler of a semi-barbarous people. A palace revolution — a sudden, fierce reversion to the customs of the Byzantine Court on which the early Tsars had modeled their own — was suddenly to clear his way to an undesired throne. The terrible events of a single night were to place him in contact with the actual problems of government which had amused his leisure.

The part played by Alexander in the preliminaries of the plot which ended in his father's assassination has been the subject of long and bitter controversy. Of a guilty foreknowledge of this tragic event, history has, on the whole, absolved him. Indeed, in a character as easily influenced as that of the young Tsarevitch, it is difficult to discriminate between his own designs and those of the courtiers who advised him. The atmosphere of hatred and of cringing fear which surrounded the person of his father can hardly have failed to undermine even the natural sentiments of filial loyalty.

In judging of Alexander's conduct during this crisis, it must be remembered that all earlier plots and cabals intended to rob an unworthy father of his birthright had failed because of his refusal to consent to such unfilial acts. He had manfully resisted even the plans of the masterful Empress Catherine to anticipate his own accession to the throne. He must, however, by slow degrees have become accus-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

tomed to the idea. A majority of the courtiers desired his father's disappearance at any price. The whole capital looked forward to his own early reign as the sole remedy for a state of affairs rapidly tending toward anarchy. All Russia was trembling before the caprices of a madman. Paul's mania for copying the traits of Frederick the Great took on more and more dangerous proportions. Drills at all hours of the day and night drove even his pampered guards to sullen mutiny. Often for some trivial fault — an unbuttoned uniform or boots of "Russian cut" — he would personally chastise a captain in the face of his company on parade. Fear of assassination drove him to abandon the Winter Palace, and to take up his residence in a new building designed like a fortress and surrounded by an impassable moat. His only intimates were men of the lowest origin, his own "creations," who nevertheless betrayed to his enemies his threats and mad menaces that did not spare his own wife and family.

For the purposes of a study of Alexander's foreign policy, there is no need for more than a shuddering side-glance at the sordid tragedy of Paul's death. The official version of his end — as told in Alexander's proclamation — was a transparent falsehood, yet it was accepted with general approval. The more legally minded could comfort themselves with the thought that in his last moments Paul had placed his name upon the documents attesting his formal "abdication" which the conspirators had brought with

ALEXANDER I

them ready for his signature. The next irreparable step was almost inevitable. Hardly had Paul completed this act when the noise of the Palace Guards gathering outside alarmed the invaders. With the quick decision of desperate men, "one of the conspirators took off his official scarf and tied it round the Emperor's throat." The sounds of a struggle were heard — in complete darkness, for the lamps were extinguished. When the door of the Tsar's bed-chamber was finally opened, the frightened palace personnel gathered without learned that "the Emperor had just passed away during a stroke of apoplexy."

Paul's dead body showed it to be in the interest of all to believe this suspicious tale. Even his most devoted adherents lost courage, realizing that further resistance was useless. Zoubov, after haranguing the crowd, undertook the task of bringing the new Tsar to the scene of his father's death. Alexander was found fully dressed sitting upon his bed (according to Czartoryski, who describes in detail the manner in which the news of his accession was rudely broken to him). When the ex-favorite addressed him as "Sire," he burst into tears. There is every reason to believe that "Alexander had thought he was merely to play the rôle of regent in his father's place."

VI

At the very outset of the reign so tragically begun, the young Tsar was called upon to face two outstand-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

ing crises. The first was a diplomatic problem of the first magnitude; the second, an internal situation that might have reduced his own part in future events to the inglorious rôle of an Eastern monarch governed by a guilty cabal. In both these connections he showed a resourcefulness and strength of character that heartened his well-wishers. It must also be allowed that he showed an ability to compromise concerning his policies, and even his principles, that is filled with significance for the student of his future career.

Within a few hours of his accession, Alexander was faced with the necessity of making a complete change in Russia's system of foreign alliances. In order to save his capital, he consented to a doubly treasonable act toward allies engaged in carrying out a policy wholly in accord with his most high-minded expressions of international conduct. The alternative was a loss of prestige that might have been fatal to his new position. The dilemma was, perhaps, the most painful that could present itself to an "idealist" of the Tsar's temperament. Yet he might console himself with the thought that it was an inevitable legacy from the confused complex of impulses that Paul was pleased to call his "foreign policy." But a few months before his death, the mad Tsar had seen fit to separate himself from the European Coalition against the French Revolutionaries and to throw in his lot with Napoleon. A personal quarrel with the Em-

ALEXANDER I

peror of Austria was the beginning of this unnatural *rapprochement*. The refusal of Great Britain to return the fortress of Malta to the knights of that Mediæval Order was the determining cause. These relics of feudal chivalry had irresistibly appealed to Paul's oddly dramatic sense of justice by sending a delegation, clad in the picturesque robes of olden days, to plead their cause before him. As the last "Emperor of the East" they demanded that Paul should become their Protector and Grand Master. He rapturously agreed, holding lodges of this eminently Catholic institution in St. Petersburg at which he presided in person. All these events were artfully used by Napoleon to bring about a final rupture between England and Russia. As a result, the military power of Russia was unreservedly placed at the disposal of the French.

In the light of his son's "internationalism," the reasons advanced for this reversal of Paul's foreign policy are also worthy of note: "The Emperor entered into a coalition to maintain the peace of Europe. He has, however, abandoned this project since he has become aware that the policy of the powers is one of imperialism, a course which he cannot aid or support. As France and Russia are so distant they can never reciprocally injure each other, it follows that, united, they could prevent other states whose ambitions lead them to grow and dominate their neighbors from injuring either of them."

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Following the preliminaries of peace, Napoleon sent a French Mission to St. Petersburg to cultivate the good opinion of the Russian Court. Alexander and his brother Constantine gazed curiously, for the first time, on these heroes of the Republican *épopée*. They even attempted to call Duroc "Citizen," and the "liberal" Tsarevitch was crestfallen to find this mode of address had gone out of fashion in France.

Even before a formal treaty had been signed between Napoleon and the Tsar, they were already deep in their famous plan for the conquest of India. In this scheme the Russian Cossacks of the Don were to coöperate with an expeditionary force of French troops in a march across Persia following the footsteps of the armies of Alexander the Great. Napoleon also proposed a renewal of Catherine's famous policy of the "Armed Neutrality." This was a diplomatic combination of immediate interest to a strict enforcement of the "Continental System." Paul's somewhat caricatural "internationalism" was soon won over to this plan, but the Russian merchants viewed the loss of their British trade in a less philosophic spirit. In August, 1800, the Tsar pompously resumed the rôle of "Protector of Neutral Commerce." The Baltic was declared a "closed sea" from which "the hostilities of the outer world" were excluded. Sweden, Denmark, and Prussia (the other "Powers of the North" whose commerce had been harassed by British privateers) allied their squadrons to the

ALEXANDER I

leaky fleet of Russian warships, and the Tsar and his sons undertook a cautious tour of naval inspection. Clad in a Grand Admiral's uniform, of his own design, and recalling the ambitions of Peter the Great to make Russia a great naval power, Paul walked the decks of his ship, until overcome by seasickness.

In April, 1801, the British fleet won a crushing naval victory off Copenhagen — and the “Armed Neutrality” ceased to exist. After offering terms tending to separate Denmark from Russia — which were loyally rejected — the victorious fleet proceeded up the Baltic with the avowed intention of capturing Kronstadt and St. Petersburg. The squadron appeared before the former place, the key to the harbor of the Russian capital. With guns trained for battle, the startling news of Paul's death caused the British Admiral to suspend further operations until the disposition of the Tsar's successor could be ascertained. In taking this step, the British Admiral was aware that all the commercial interests of Russia were undoubtedly on their side, and that a large party at Court had always opposed the Napoleonic alliance.

Alexander's first impulse was a characteristic determination “to defend the rights of neutrals.” At this juncture, however, the British Ministry were moved to propose an “International Conference,” a form of negotiation which the new Tsar was always to find irresistible. Reflection (and the curious instinct for practical advantage that accompanied his ideal-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

ism) showed him that the moment was not ripe for discussing delicate points of international law. All the Powers interested were invited to send representatives in order to arrange the differences concerning the "rights of neutrals," and in response to this overture Admiral Hyde Parker was notified by the Russian authorities of the new Emperor's disposition for peace.

To his own satisfaction at least, Alexander's "ideals" were actually to offer a convenient outlet to his difficulties! The Prussian King was desired to evacuate Hanover for reasons which, Czartoryski maintains, were "a distinct advance upon the international morality of the day." While costing the Tsar nothing, a fine gesture enabled him to meet the views of Great Britain. Alexander wrote that he was not only "desirous of pacifying the North," but also of establishing a "continuing world peace." He ended with the pious hope that, in view of the high object to be accomplished, Frederick William "would place no difficulties in the way."¹

On June 17, 1801, the proposed Congress of the "Powers of the North" — namely, Russia, Denmark, Sweden, and Prussia — assembled in St. Petersburg. The protocol agreed upon, with the exception of a clause forbidding paper blockades, was wholly favorable to the contentions of Great Britain. The parties agreed: (1) that a neutral flag should *not*

¹Garden.

ALEXANDER

cover enemy goods, and (2) that visit and search were permissible even when vessels were under the convoy of a vessel of war.

If the Scandinavian allies of Russia, one of whom had gloriously suffered the loss of her fleet in defending the rights of neutrals, could see in this arrangement little else than a base betrayal of the principles which the "Armed Neutrality" had sworn to defend, Czartoryski might at least console the Tsar with the thought that he had given an example of philosophic devotion to the cause of "internationalism" and had bowed with every possible grace to the force of inevitable events.

VII

THE second great problem facing Alexander at the threshold of his career was of an intimate personal nature, and he met it with resolution and courage. Heretofore those who had been instrumental in bringing about a change of rulers in Russia had always shared in the glories of the ensuing reign. Count Pahlen was not only the head of the conspiracy that had placed the young Tsar on the throne, but also, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, had brought about at a critical moment the cessation of hostilities with England. Perhaps the growing scandal, spread far and wide by Napoleonic propagandists, that "Pitt's gold" had played a part in both these "accommodations," had reached the sensitive ears of Paul's son.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Alexander, indeed, found himself in strange company for an idealist. The courtiers who surrounded him soon observed that it was no longer advisable to boast of having "belonged to the conspiracy." Panin, one of the actual murderers, had already been exiled to his estates. Pahlen, with a curious attempt at bravado, declared that he had "never plotted the death of the Tsar," and even tried to implicate Alexander in his own alleged plans for a "regency." But the latter was now suffering the tortures of filial remorse. With a horrified gesture, he thrust from the capital not only Pahlen, but all the minor members of the cabal on whom any measure of guilt could be attached.

Czartoryski, summoned from the "Grand Tour" (which the Tsar Paul had suggested might "benefit his health"), was hastily recalled to the capital. He found a "penitent" on the throne: the Tsar bowed down by grief. "Had you been here, all this might have been avoided," was Alexander's greeting. His whole time was taken up with drilling his guards to the verge of exhaustion. He seemed to find a certain consolation in the belief that following out the petty details of garrison routine would have met his father's approval.

The new Tsarina Elizabeth did her best to console him. But an unfortunate estrangement had long since separated him from the charming confidante of his earlier days. After a long series of less creditable infidelities, Alexander's wandering fancy had become

ALEXANDER I

fixed upon a single object: Marie Antovna Narishkine, “ni intrigante, ni malfaisante, ni vindicative.” This mediocre charmer, whose one quality was a luxurious and surpassing beauty, was to be beloved by the Tsar with a fidelity which she was incapable of returning. She cost him, however, for many years the love and understanding which his complex nature craved and of which his own wife alone was capable.

During the early months of his reign he turned for consolation to his old dreams of internal reform. He soon gathered about him the friends and advisers upon whom he might most naturally depend for encouragement] and support. The “Young Liberals Circle” who had been the intimates of Alexander’s youth now hastened from the four quarters of Europe, where the desire of the Tsar Paul to separate the heir-apparent from their liberal influences had dispersed them in semi-official exile. From England came Novosiltzov, filled with renewed admiration for the constitution and political life of the British Commonwealth. Stroganov, the aristocratic admirer of the French Revolution, returned from Paris and the radical salons. Most welcome of all was Alexander’s old tutor, Laharpe, who journeyed from Switzerland at the Tsar’s urgent summons.

Laharpe was now somewhat disabused of many of his youthful enthusiasms. Unlimited “liberty, equality, and fraternity” had not wholly agreed with the Swiss temperament. He had taken a prominent part

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

in inviting the French Revolutionary Government to interfere in the civil quarrels of his native Canton. But the victories of the French troops over the armies of the Bernese oligarchy had been marked by such scenes of pillage and disorder as to trouble even the "pure" Republicanism of Rousseau's pupil. His fellow countrymen, not unnaturally, held him responsible for his share in bringing about their predicament, and his departure from his native land was not inopportune. Nevertheless, he arrived in St. Petersburg wearing the pretentious uniform of a "Director of the French Helvetian Republic." Girded about with a tri-color sash and a huge sword, the good philosopher excited open ridicule among both the reactionary and liberal circles at Court.

Although he had been greeted with the respectful joy of a disciple reunited to a revered master, the Tsar's intimates of the now powerful "Secret Committee" found Laharpe "far below his reputation." "M. de Laharpe," wrote Czartoryski, "had his philosophic panaceas for all Russia's troubles. These developed in reports and memorandums so diffuse that even the Emperor could not bring himself to read them. At the same time, Alexander never permitted the ideas of his old preceptor to be treated with disregard." The members of the group called "Young Liberals," or, more briefly, "The Circle," now began to play a highly important rôle in Russian affairs. The origins of the programme of international

ALEXANDER I

organization, which at a later day was destined to astonish the Tsar's diplomatic contemporaries, are probably to be found in the confabulations of this curious *inquirendo*. The influence of Laharpe had placed a philosophic liberal on the throne of the Romanovs. To Czartoryski's love of his native Poland was probably due Alexander's earlier aspirations for a "New Order" among the nations. To Novosiltzov, a typical office-seeking *tchinovnik*, with a taste for reports and mildly beneficent legislation, may well be ascribed the well-coördinated programme of the "Instructions" that bear his name. A good critic of political composition, the Tsar himself probably contributed much besides the inspiration of his sympathetic idealism. Yet it is a noteworthy fact that even in the moments of their greatest influence these collaborators remained loyally in the background.

"Our mutual relations," wrote Czartoryski, "became every day more important. . . . Our duty also became clear. We formed, as it were, a guard about the Emperor's person to aid him in his desire to obtain governmental reforms. This was the real bond among us. We were held up on all sides as a model of united and consistent friendship. Our motto or device was the following: 'To hold ourselves superior to merely selfish interests and to be proof against the temptations of place or favor.' "

"Such a programme," he subsequently wrote, "was impossible to acclimatize in Russia, but it chimed in

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

with the ideals that had guided the Emperor's youth. At a later date even the Emperor wearied of servants who wished to distinguish themselves by refusing rewards readily granted to every one else."

The advantage of meeting the Emperor constantly and intimately was granted to all the members of "The Circle." Nearly every evening after dinner, Alexander and his friends gathered in a little dressing-room adjacent to the royal apartments. Here, untrammelled by etiquette, each gave his opinion regarding projected reforms: "There was no subject we did not discuss; every person present was free to offer detailed ideas."¹ But by slow degrees it became apparent to these privileged young counsellors that, somehow, their position was less important than was commonly believed. Behind a gentle mask of liberalism the Tsar hid a relentless determination not to be hurried into precipitant action. The administration of the Empire remained, generally, in the hands of the same officials who had carried out the policies of Catherine the Great. The reforms that were so attentively elaborated by the meetings of "The Circle" were usually "referred back" to their author "for further consideration." But one notable reform was obtained in the much-discussed "Customs Laws" of the Empire. The Tsar was induced to grant to the Senate a right of suggestion or "representation" respecting the Imperial Ukases—a faculty which, it

¹ Czartoryski.

ALEXANDER I

was believed, might develop into a legislative function. But on the solitary occasion on which this new privilege was exercised, Alexander's ill-humor became so apparent that the unfortunate Senator who was charged with the communication lost countenance and abruptly changed his speech into a eulogy of the Tsar's "benevolence." This characteristic incident turned the attention of the "Young Liberals" to the consideration of the more general and less embarrassing topic of Foreign Affairs.

VIII

CZARTORYSKI's programme as Foreign Minister (to which post he was appointed after Pahlen's fall) revived the generous ideals of his earlier internationalist conversations with Alexander:

I firmly believed that it might be possible for me to reconcile the tendencies of the Russian nation with the generous ideals of its ruler, and to make use of the Russian craving for glory and supremacy for the general benefit of mankind. The object was a great but a remote one, to be pursued consistently and with perseverance, and to be executed with patience and skill. I thought it was worthy of the national pride of the Russian people. I would have wished Alexander to become a sort of arbiter of peace for the civilized world, to be the protector of the weak and the oppressed, and that his reign should inaugurate a new era of justice and right in European politics.

An occasion to justify these noble sentiments was not long in presenting itself. Soon after Czartoryski's

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

appointment, in 1804, the Duke of Enghien, grandson of the Great Condé, was treacherously seized by Napoleon's orders within the territory of the Grand Duchy of Baden, and dragged across the French frontier. After the mockery of a court-martial, he was shot to death in the moat of the fortress of Vincennes. The disregard for international rights shown by this violation of neutral territory and its accompanying judicial murder aroused all Europe to a fury of protest. Talleyrand was reported to have cynically admonished Napoleon: "It is worse than a crime, it is a mistake!"

Two months later, Bonaparte notified the Powers, still aghast at this unnecessary tragedy, of his formal assumption of the Imperial title. The new Emperor of France could hardly have chosen a more unfavorable moment for entering the ranks of the sovereigns of Europe. Although in practical effect the abolition of the Consulate was a mere matter of form, Russia refused to recognize Napoleon's usurpation. Only Austria and the subservient Hohenzollern dynasty, both of whom had felt the weight of his displeasure, acquiesced in the Imperial pretensions of the ex-revolutionary general. The way was prepared for a fresh coalition of the Powers of Europe, in which the Tsar of Russia was to play the rôle of mediator which Czartoryski had so ardently desired him to essay. Their ideals and dreams of international polity were, moreover, about to receive definite form in the Tsar's "Instructions to Novosiltzov" when that member

ALEXANDER I

of the "Young Liberals" Committee was sent to London on a Special Mission. The whole question of French aggression was made part of a broader subject — a comprehensive scheme of World Organization. The history of this eminently practical plan deserves renewed attention at the present day.

The "Instructions" follow the policy of a carefully written opinion dated April 5, 1804, in which Czartoryski sought to define the Tsar's attitude toward a government which "tramples under foot the most generally accepted principles of international law." The duty of Russia and the Powers "to decry and avenge" such action was discussed at length.¹ In the opinion both of Czartoryski and the Emperor a preliminary understanding between Great Britain and Russia promised the surest guarantee for the success of their international programme and the proposed alliance against the hegemony of France. In September, 1804, Alexander was prepared to lay before the British Cabinet a scheme not only for immediate military action, but also for an eventual rational settlement of the entire diplomatic situation. The understanding between these Powers was to form the basis of a wider coalition. Such, indeed, was the only means which might conceivably place a limit upon Napoleon's ambitions.

In reading the "Instructions," Czartoryski's contention, that history has neglected both their importance

¹ Czartoryski.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

and significance, becomes obvious. Modern writers have in a measure repaired this error, recognizing that they laid the foundations upon which, ten years later, rested the programme of intervention and reconstruction contained in the Treaties of Kalisch and Chaumont. "Compare this language," says Sorel, speaking of Novosiltzov's Mission to Pitt, "with that which Koutousov addressed to the Germans in 1813, and with that which Alexander addressed to the French Liberals in 1814. It will be seen that all forms part of the same programme. The same may even be said of the measures planned in 1804 and 1814 for the reconstruction of continental Europe."

The opening paragraph of Novosiltzov's "Instructions" contains an eloquent recognition of the growing force of public opinion in international affairs:

The most effectual weapon which France now wields — one with which the French continue to menace their neighbors — is their ability to persuade public opinion that their cause is that of the liberty and prosperity of all nations.

As a condition preceding the "moral union" he sought with Great Britain, Alexander asks the latter's adhesion to a "New Order" which must be brought about. The "New Order" was a highly practical programme of "self-determination," the outlines of a reconstruction of Europe on "national" lines. The King of Sardinia, who had been unjustly deprived by Napoleon of his throne, was to be reëstablished, but not

ALEXANDER I

until he had promised to give his people the benefits of "a wise and free constitution." The importance of maintaining Swiss neutrality was also recognized "as an essential factor in the peace of Europe." In restoring Holland to national existence, the modern theory of self-determination is recognized: "The character of the national desires must be considered before deciding upon the form of government to be established."

A paragraph respecting the attitude to be adopted by the Anglo-Russian Alliance toward France herself is equally significant at the present day:

I now come to the language which, in my opinion, it will be necessary to hold with respect to France herself. After having imposed our will upon her, and after having, through just, benevolent, and liberal principles, manifested our intentions (giving her confidence that she can count upon the promises made by our Alliance), we should declare that it is not upon France that we make war, but only upon a government as tyrannical toward France as toward the rest of Europe.

There is no suggestion in the Tsar's plan for a super-state (the favorite remedy of the eighteenth-century philosophers for all international ills) nor any hint of the doctrine of intervention in the internal affairs of neighboring states (the policy which was later to render the pretensions of the Holy Alliance most hateful in the eyes of the "Constitutional Powers").

It seems evident that this great aim can only be considered as attained when we shall have succeeded in

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

reconciling the nations with their governments, and in making the latter capable of action tending to the best interests of their people. We must also fix the relations of the states among themselves by means of well-defined rules, which it will be in the interest of all to respect. Profound examination of these matters and the lessons of history will prove that these two results can only be obtained when the interior order of all states is based upon free institutions, protected against the passions and ambitions of the individuals who may be placed at their head.

Perhaps the most important paragraph of Novosiltzov's "Instructions" is the one in which the Tsar, after a brief historical notice of former proposals to organize humanity, finds the guarantee of future peace in a pact binding the nations of Europe by means of a general treaty or confederacy — a League of Nations — whose guiding principles would be those of international law and wherein mediation would be substituted for war:

I can see no reason why, after peace has been declared, we should not undertake to negotiate a general treaty which might become the basis of the reciprocal relations between the states of Europe. This, indeed, will almost inevitably suggest itself at the moment of a general pacification, especially if no incomplete and partial peace be allowed to interfere, an end to which both Powers are equally interested in devoting all their efforts and designs.

When the Treaty of Westphalia was signed, a similar proposal was entertained. But the degree of political development and other circumstances paramount at the time would not allow the consummation of this great

ALEXANDER

work, in spite of the fact that for a long time this pact formed the basis of foreign relations. Modern diplomacy should be adequate to meet the situation which presents itself. Impossible though the attainment of a state of eternal peace would appear to be, nevertheless in many ways this end might be forwarded if the treaty, which should conclude the present general war, shall embody clear and precise principles and prescriptions with respect to international law. Why should not a law of nations be evolved assuring the privileges of neutrality and consecrating as an obligation never to commence war without having exhausted all the means of mediation by a third party? — a mediator who, having through the proper means examined the respective wrongs of the litigants, will seek to compound them? It is by applying such principles that a true and lasting pacification of the world might be obtained.

It is, moreover, interesting to note that membership in the proposed League of Peace was based upon a voluntary decision by its members. Alexander evidently believed that the advantages to be obtained through becoming a party to this general treaty would be patent to all the civilized states of Europe:

After having experienced the drawbacks and inconveniences of a complete — though precarious and illusory — independent existence, the majority of all Powers would probably desire to belong to such a League. This would not only guarantee as far as possible their external tranquillity and safety, but also (especially in the case of states of a secondary order) would offer them internal guarantees of protection.

Nor does the Tsar avoid consideration of the practical details of his problem. An interesting paragraph

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

in the "Instructions" has reference to questions of political geography, of strategic frontiers — even of what the diplomatic jargon of the present day has named "economic frontiers":

In order to secure our ends, it would be necessary to fix the frontiers which properly belong to each separate state. It would thus appear especially desirable to follow the boundaries which Nature herself has laid down; that is, mountain chains, seas, etc. Finally, the proper means of access should be assured to each nation for the interchange of the products of its soil and industry. It might also be advisable if possible to obtain that each state should consist of homogeneous people in agreement among themselves and with the government that rules them.

Finally, with respect to the old principle of "the balance of power" and the ever-present questions of the lesser nationalities, Alexander offers a striking solution — the grouping of the smaller states into federations which would place them more nearly on a par with their neighbors:

The disturbances which have shaken Europe almost continually for so many centuries have only taken place because so little attention has been paid to any system of natural equilibrium. Just how far this principle could be made to govern the new arrangement which should follow the general pacification, it would be difficult for the present to decide. It would depend largely upon what Powers should be admitted to these councils and the logical outcome of events. Nevertheless, it is even now possible to recognize the necessity of strengthening as far as possible the secondary Powers

ALEXANDER I

in order that these may be capable of self-protection, at least until the protecting Powers and the other members of the League can come to their assistance. For the same reason it is evident that the existence of very small states would not be in accord with the ends desired. Since these are without the necessary powers of resistance, they can only serve as temptations to the ambitions of larger states without contributing in any way to the general good. A means of remedying this inconvenience might be found by uniting them to larger states, or in grouping them in small federative unions.

Alexander's disappointment at the modifications brought by the practical-minded Pitt to his plan was freely expressed. In its final form the Treaty of Concert signed by Great Britain and Russia was but a pale reflection of the generous proposals contained in the original overtures made by Novosiltzov. However, the principles admitted as governing the aims of the contracting parties were a marked advance upon any preceding negotiation of a like character. The shadow, if not the substance, of the Tsar's idea was still apparent. He could still readily assert that the object of his alliance lay far beyond the sphere of mere particular interests. As a recent Russian historian has pertinently remarked: "The resulting document might have been dated from Washington in the year of 1917-18."¹

The negotiations carried on by the Tsar's envoy in London mark a date in the history of international organization. Yet their practical result was failure.

¹ Korff.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Hardly had the ratifications of the Treaty of Concert been exchanged (April 11, 1805) when the underlying major difference in the point of view of the two great Powers engaged became manifest. Alexander still hesitated to underscore his foreign policy by definite warlike preparations against Napoleon. His desire to carry out internal reforms in Russia operated in a sense contrary to the "military alliance" which Pitt professed to see in the new pact. Novosiltzov, smarting under the fact that the final ratifications had been obtained by the British Minister before his return to St. Petersburg, was the first to encourage his master to stand firmly against a warlike policy. Alexander persisted in viewing his Great Idea, finally realized, as a work of peace, not of war.

IX

ALEXANDER was not the first idealist to find his dreams inexorably leading him to the edge of the abyss from which he fled. A War to Conquer Peace — he was soon to discover — may be no less horrible in its practical consequences than the most sordid of conquests. From the beginning his principal ally, the Emperor of Austria, chilled his enthusiasm. Tall, thin, tightly buttoned in a white uniform, the Holy Roman Emperor physically looked the part which destiny had cast him to play — the Ghost of a Lost Cause. "Respect for the Holy Roman Empire," Rousseau had written but ten years previously, "has

ALEXANDER I

far outlasted its real power . . . yet jurisconsults still debate whether the Emperor of Germany is not the natural Sovereign of the World." This glorious position Francis seemed willing to abdicate in favor of the Tsar. The duty which Kaunitz had pointed out — that Austria should lead the nations united "as a single family" to preserve "the faith of treaties" — passed to the younger man.

In his destiny to wield the "temporal sword"—with which under the dispensation of a day long past he was charged to maintain God's peace among the princes of the world — Francis had so far found nothing but disillusion. In his struggles with Napoleon — the embodiment of the revolutionary spirit of the time — he had experienced, and was to experience again, nothing but the bitterness of defeat. In vain did Alexander, ardent and idealistic, seek to inspire the poor "King of the World" with something of his own crusading spirit.

The Tsar viewed the coming campaign as a justifiable means to his great end. As all his advisers foresaw, real danger lay in his determination to take part in every council and to march in person at the head of troops he had only seen maneuver upon the parade-ground. There was something theatrical in his insistence on the personal side of the duel between himself and the Emperor of France. The day had not yet arrived when he could declare without boasting, "There is no place in Europe for Bonaparte and myself."

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

As early as October 5, 1804, the Tsar had informed the Foreign Ministers of the Powers on whose assistance he relied that diplomatic relations between France and his Empire were severed. Yet almost a year was to elapse before actual hostilities commenced between the two great Empires — a year of negotiations artfully prolonged from different motives by all the parties to the quarrel.

During the period of Novosiltzov's Mission to England, Alexander addressed a series of personal letters to the King of Prussia begging him to forget the defeats inflicted by the French and to throw in his lot with the Allies. But Frederick William (in partial possession, at least, of the favors contemptuously accorded him by Napoleon) replied to these advances with a time-honored diplomatic equivocation: the offer of a mediation. He believed that the *casus belli* — but remotely involving Russia's honor or interest — offered but slight promise that the Tsar would persist in his attitude of generous defiance. The murder of a Bourbon Prince was but a weak foundation for a "new international system."

On September 15th (1805), Alexander's patience reached its limit. In the terms of a "friendly" ultimatum he now demanded a free passage for his troops through Prussian territory. Failing to obtain any reply, he crossed the frontier without further parley. The unfortunate Frederick William now found himself confronted with the situation he always

ALEXANDER I

found most appalling: the necessity of a decision which could neither be postponed nor avoided. It was only when Napoleon invaded the Prussian principality of Anspach that the vacillating Hohenzollern at last decided to throw in his lot with Russia and Austria against the disturber of the World's Peace.

Before leaving the capital, the Tsar prayed devoutly at the Cathedral of Kazan. All the members of the "Young Liberals Circle" accompanied Alexander on his departure from St. Petersburg on what they felt to be a modern crusade. Kouchoubey, Novosiltzov, and Czartoryski, raised to "military" rank, found places on his staff. Surrounded by his nearest friends, radiantly happy in the belief that he had at length secured the support of an enlightened "public opinion" both in Russia and in Europe, the young Emperor rode in triumph through Weimar (with a pause to receive the homage of the philosophic trinity, Goethe, Schilling, and Herder, whom the Grand Duke had assembled at his Court) to the military rendezvous where the Emperor Francis tremulously awaited him.

The main French army was at Brunn, near Austerlitz, the insignificant Austrian village, about to receive the fiery baptism of immortality. A description of this decisive struggle is beyond the scope of our subject, except for its effect upon the mind and character of Alexander. The Tsar's conduct during the battle was carefully observed and recorded by Czartoryski:

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

It was believed that Napoleon was in a dangerous position and planning to retreat. Russian scouts reported that the French advance posts had "an air of timidity and hesitation" which maintained this illusion. . . . At every moment news was brought to us announcing a retreat of the French forces. The strategical importance of the crisis was forgotten in our anxiety not to lose this splendid opportunity to destroy the French army, and thus to overthrow Napoleon by a single fatal blow.

The French army appeared about to escape. A forward movement was therefore decided upon in order not to lose the benefit of our positions. Although little resistance was expected, the simultaneous advance of each army corps was considered necessary.

The French army passed the night in easy and confident repose following a meal shared by the Emperor with his soldiers as he passed among the cheering bivouacs. In the Russian camp all was confusion. Till almost dawn the Russian generals were kept fretting in a war council, while Weyrother, the Tsar's Chief of Staff, read, in German, the changed dispositions adopted for the following morning. These matters were understood by only a fraction of his hearers. The Tsar's tour of inspection with the improvised soldiers of the "Secret Committee" filled him with disillusion. Some of the Russian regiments had had no food for forty-eight hours. A colonel, whom Alexander reproved for the conditions in which the equipment of his troops was found, expressed total ignorance of the fact that the enemy were in the neighborhood!¹

¹ Walezewski.

ALEXANDER I

Alexander's military ardor revived with the excitement of the moment. The sight of his splendid guards, trained under his own supervision, marching at parade step toward the enemy filled him with emotion and pride. In spite of the fact that his presence could only hinder the decisions of the veteran Kutusov, the young Tsar was to be found everywhere, now galloping to the advance posts, now returning to the point of vantage he had himself chosen from whence to view the victory.

On one of these excursions Alexander's horse fell, throwing him violently to the ground — an event which depressed his companions by its evil augury.

As the crisis of battle approached, the Tsar and his staff were in their appointed place. Czartoryski's description of the events which followed is dramatically brief:

Suddenly we saw the French columns rapidly advance, throwing back the forces opposing them. The quick, precise maneuvers of these troops caused me to fear for the results of the day. The Emperor seemed equally impressed with the celerity of their advance, which threw the whole Austrian front into a panic. We now noticed that, at this important point, no cavalry escort had been stationed. A moment later we observed that it was time to look to the safety of the Emperor's person. By a common impulse all turned our horses' heads away from the battle.

Nightfall found Alexander and Czartoryski following, at a fast pace, the cobbled road to Holitch. The

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Tsar was extremely cast down. His past emotions had unfortunately affected his bodily health, and alone Czartoryski was able to give him little aid. Two miserable days and three nights were thus passed. In the villages along the route they heard "nothing but the sounds of revelry, everywhere a confusion of troops and civilians trying to drown their sorrows in drink." All about were scenes of disorder. After interminable hours of such travel, they came to a more important town, where a room was found for the Tsar. "If a few troops of cavalry had been sent in pursuit of us," adds his biographer, "I do not know what the result would have been."

Czartoryski's important "Memoirs" suddenly stop at this point. But from other sources, notably his collected correspondence, we learn of the results of this overwhelming disaster—the discontent at St. Petersburg and the reproaches, less and less respectful, which the officers of the army addressed to the Tsar.

The return to St. Petersburg was timed to take place at midnight, Alexander and his staff arriving, as Novosiltzov expressed it, "like owls in the night." Yet the false bulletins that had preceded them caused an illumination of the city and an arch of triumph for the "Victorious Benefactor of Mankind."

But Alexander had little opportunity to ponder the disaster to the cause of internationalism. His fault was doubled by the fact that he had sacrificed

ALEXANDER I

the flower of his army in forwarding measures in no sense vital to the honor of Russia. The Court, accustomed to the military glories of Catherine's reign, held him mercilessly to task. The proud old Boyars, who had known only the invincible and opportunistic policy of their time, openly regretted the mad reign of his father glorified by the victories of Souvarov. Like Joseph's brethren, they "hated him for his dreams."

Most bitter of all were the reproaches of his own intimate and chosen band of advisers, the "Secret Committee," whose doctrinaire theories of "International Right" were largely responsible for the attitude which the Tsar had adopted toward the invincible realism of Napoleon. These amateur statesmen could see no fault in their own policy based on doctrinaire theory. They were loud in their complaints and obtrusive explanations. Czartoryski's letters written at this time are masterpieces of an insufferable and priggish disassociation from the faults of the campaign. If his companion of the Via Dolorosa of the Holitch Road could so far forget the consideration due to well-meaning intentions, who can blame Laharpe's pupil for temporarily abandoning his "international" programme or the arrangement he sought with the triumphant Imperialist? Yet Tilsit with the Napoleonic Alliance which followed was but a truce in Alexander's programme of internationalism. This is perhaps the strongest proof of the value of his original plan.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

But when, after nearly a decade, he resumed the tone and principles of the "Instructions to Novosiltzov," it was under conditions far different from those preceding Austerlitz. Between the young, bright-dreaming Alexander of 1804 and the mystical contriver of the reactionary "Holy Alliance" of 1815 there is all the difference of a decade of diplomatic disillusion, of broken health, and of liberalism betrayed.

II

NAPOLEON THE DIPLOMACY OF IMPERIALISM

I

"NAPOLEON," wrote Talleyrand in his "Memoirs" concerning his master's diplomacy, "enjoyed quitting the Lion's raiment to put on the skin of the Fox." Modern historians, creators of the "Imperial Legend," have pictured Napoleon as a genius universal in every department of government. The Code Napoléon certainly proves his transcendent ability as a law-giver. Brumaire and a hundred incidents of his career as a politician show that he had mastered the difficult psychology of the French nation. Yet with all an Italian's love of *combinazione*, Napoleon often erred as a diplomat. Of that art which consists in reconciling opposing viewpoints; in persuading an opponent that his interests may coincide with a determined course of action, he was wholly innocent.

In the days of his might Napoleon preferred to break down opposition. As he himself admitted at St. Helena, he early "lost the habit of compromise." Yet, in all his querulous complaints of the "disloyalty" of his allies, there appears the same misunderstanding of the reasons that wrecked in turn every Napoleonic alliance: Tilsit, and the forced complicity

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

of Alexander; the dynastic alliance with Austria that brought a Hapsburg Archduchess to his throne; the precarious minor alliances of the "Continental System" — all failed him. His allies would not "stay bought." The jackal's share in the splendid enterprises of the conqueror were meanly offered — and in vain. And when the mighty wave of republican propaganda on which Napoleon first rode to power was spent — frankly replaced by his own mad dream of a restored "World Empire" — came the end.

Not the least revealing of Napoleon's valedictory conversations with Las Cases at St. Helena are his references to his plans for "International Organization." Most of these, it must be admitted, were entirely retrospective. In the sultry gardens of Longwood, Napoleon talked for hours on the subject of a Europe that might have been. Generally these versions resembled reality about as much as the stout, flabby little figure in a linen suit and Panama hat recalled the compactly efficient Emperor of the days of Austerlitz.

Indeed, piecing together these scattered references to foreign affairs and diplomacy, it is hard to avoid a startling conclusion: the famous "Napoleonic System" as a foreign policy was nebulous and wholly subordinated to the changing fortunes of the battlefield. As the Emperor himself admitted one day in a burst of frankness, "I was never foolish enough to try to make events conform to my 'System.' I suited



NAPOLEON I

NAPOLEON

my System to the events." This charitable self-appreciation was fortified by another astonishing admission: "Under the Empire I was no longer master of my acts." The latter statement may be taken as a corollary of the former.

With all the frankness of an unequaled master of tactics and strategy, Napoleon admitted a military mistake as unerringly — and as readily — as any of his critics. His comments on his own campaigns are part of the classics of war. The student of diplomatic history, however, looks in vain among the confidences and indiscretions so piously gathered by Las Cases for similar revelations. Diplomacy and diplomats were always a fascinating subject to the Emperor. He theorized without end concerning the exact moment when "Talleyrand began to be a traitor." Metternich, in whose silken nets the Eagle was taken after the truce of Pleisewitz, was referred to in such terms of barracks *engueulade* that his biographer is obliged to resort to the stars and asterisks of conventional propriety in reporting the conversation. In the end he even brought himself to recognize the value of Alexander's "dreams." "I, too, would have had my Congress," he exclaimed bitterly after the great European gathering of Vienna; "I, too, would have had my Holy Alliance."

"One of my constant preoccupations," he declared, "was a reunion, a concentration of the nations, separated and estranged by revolution and politics. There

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

were thirty million Frenchmen, fifteen million Spaniards, fifteen million Italians, and thirty million Germans of whom I would have made a single nation. There would have been a union of laws, principles, and opinions. I dreamed of a great European family, governed by a Congress like that of America or the Greek Amphitrion. All of Central Europe, compact in sentiments, opinions, and interests, would have had nothing to fear from the nations of the North. What a spectacle of force, grandeur, and prosperity!" Then he added sadly, "And I once believed myself worthy of this glory." There was little reminder, however, of the Tsar's "New Order" in this Napoleonic plan. At best, it was little else than a vast problem in organization.

As his plan grew in retrospect, its details became clear in his mind. Besides a common legal code — the Code Napoléon — guiding the conduct of individuals, a Supreme Tribunal would have interpreted International Laws — as between the nations. Rivers and the other great channels of intercommunication were to be used in common. A universal coinage would have simplified all questions of international trade and exchange. Finally, the crowning blessing: "All the armies of Europe, except the guards required by her monarchs, would be disbanded." With an Emperor-Father ruling the nations from Paris — the Capital of the World — "war itself would become impossible."

NAPOLEON

The moment fixed for realizing this touching plan of an Imperial Golden Age was "after Moscow." Had the Russians in their patriotic frenzy refrained from burning their Holy City, Napoleon hinted that an arrangement with the Tsar would have been "an easy matter." For the downfall of all his beneficent schemes he held, not Alexander, but the renegade Bernadotte, responsible. "Bernadotte should have been in St. Petersburg before we had reached Moscow." Then, in an agony of scorn, he exclaimed: "To think that this Frenchman held in his hand the destinies of the World!" The end justified even the terrible memories of the long retreat across the steppes: "After Moscow the cause of the nations should have been joined."

In the discussions at St. Helena, not only the military causes that led to the disastrous retreat of the Grand Army, but all the faults of Napoleon's diplomacy become apparent. His military genius could conceive of none but military solutions for international difficulties. At best his schemes of world organization were but the revival of a "Roman Peace" or a renewal in more effectual and more galling form of the mediæval paraphernalia of the "Holy Roman Empire" (although the latter "anomaly" he himself had wisely determined to bring to an end).

His "League of Peace among the Nations" depended on his sovereign will. It was to be *imposed* by the force of arms. He even professed a belief,

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

almost mystical, in his ability to carry through this task without the aid of public opinion: "Sudden plans," he maintained, "are those that generally succeed. . . . It was necessary that my march and subsequent actions should have something of the supernatural." There was to be no tocsin appeal to the "people."

But to be effectual such diplomacy as Napoleon's could only be the complement of military success. The "unusual idiom" of his dispatches shows a continuing obsession. Even in exile he boasted to Las Cases, "I imposed principles of diplomacy like military decisions."

It was an attitude of mind that endured until the end. He was scornful of the careful negotiation that preceded the final Coalition. The great diplomatic "Federation of Europe" which at Toeplitz, Reichenbach, and Chaumon embraced Alexander's allies in a vast politico-military conspiracy against his "System," had no significance in his eyes — until St. Helena. The final campaign that preceded Leipsic was one of his most brilliant achievements as a soldier. The great determining cause for Napoleon's downfall must be sought in other than military reasons. After Austerlitz, and the brief truce of Tilsit, Alexander opposed to Napoleon's schemes of conquest a fatal diplomatic formula: the plan of a constructive European peace.

It is a significant fact that with a fuller realization

NAPOLEON

of his own failure came Napoleon's conversion to "internationalism." Nay, more. With magnificent complacency he sought to endow his own Imperialism with the attributes of a great "League": "The impulse is given and even after my fall and the disappearance of my System, there can be no other equilibrium in Europe except through the union and federation of the Great Powers."

II

THE drama of the Napoleonic Military Legend is interrupted by three diplomatic interludes: Tilsit, Erfurt, and Dresden. In each of these Napoleon may well have believed himself the central figure, the dispensing Providence. In all three he was in reality the dupe — if not of abler minds, at least of his own diplomatic strategy. Tilsit followed the series of fatal victories ending in Eylau and Friedland that after Austerlitz placed a termination to Alexander's first great crusade in favor of the liberties of Europe. Erfurt was but a pompous reaffirmation of the "Alliance" which Tilsit had imposed upon the reluctant Tsar. Dresden was the fatal climax of Napoleon's diplomatic duel with Metternich.

Perhaps the outstanding characteristic of Napoleonic diplomacy was the value which the Emperor attached to his personal intervention in every negotiation of importance. This insistence on a direct relation between the principals was a source of strength

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

in the days of his military success. Yet it was to lead to ultimate disaster. There was more than a touch of bourgeois vanity in this weakness for *tête-à-tête* discussions with the crowned heads of ancient dynasties. Napoleon seems to have cherished until the end an almost pathetic belief in his ability to attach his adversaries to his cause through his power of creating sympathy: the exercise of his eminent personal charm. Herein lies the explanation for the bitter reproaches of "disloyalty" that fill the "Memoirs" of St. Helena. His hatred of Alexander, and notably of Metternich, was a deeply personal resentment.

Tilsit, with the *pour-parlers* that led to the first Franco-Russian Alliance, was a negotiation after his own heart. His sense of a proper dramatic *mise en scène* for this Council of Emperors was satisfied by the appointed meeting-place, a raft anchored in the middle of the shallow Niemen, the last feeble barrier that separated his victorious armies from the soil of "Holy Russia." From their conference were excluded all the customary Ministers and aides-de-camp, giving Napoleon occasion both to persuade and to impose. The military situation even offered him the advantage of being generous without cost. Perhaps for the last time he was to sense to the full that thrill of power he loved; to play for the last time the rôle of an earthly Providence.

The fastidious and sensitive Alexander found this first personal contact with Napoleon an agonizing

NAPOLEON

experience. To his sister Catherine he wrote concerning this strange adventure in tones of wonder: "A whole day with Bonaparte. . . . I ask you, is it not some waking dream?" Yet the adversaries were equally matched. Alexander, too, was a charmer of men. Towering over Napoleon, he bowed, even a shade too low as he shook the victor's hand,¹ murmuring with visible embarrassment well-rehearsed phrases of welcome. At the victor's compliments he blushed and stammered. "I was infinitely pleased with him," Napoleon wrote that night to Josephine; "he is a handsome, good young Emperor."² Yet, in spite of this good impression, Napoleon realized the necessity for caution. The sullen faces of the Russian officers who surrounded the Tsar warned him of difficulties — dangers even. His suite noticed that, in returning the official visit at Alexander's headquarters, he had refused the cup of tea that was offered him. It was the Russian monarch who took the lead in this exchange of civilities, drinking freely the wine of France. Perhaps a little ashamed of his first suspicions, Napoleon proposed to establish himself at Tilsit. He passed over to the Russian bank and with only a battalion of his Guards became the guest of the Tsar on what still might be considered Russian soil.

From the first moment of their interview Napoleon's skill as an impresario had disarmed Alexander's

¹ Sorel.

² Vandal.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

morbid fears of some personal indignity. Undeceived by these personal methods, he was nevertheless won over by Napoleon's determination to treat him as a collaborator in the great problem of securing a European peace. Napoleon even appeared reluctant to bring forward matters that might remind his host of the painful military differences that still remained to be arranged. The conversation at table turned upon problems of internal government: the Russian fur trade; the difficulties of obtaining sugar in view of the outrageous British blockade.

But one intimately personal question still troubled the tone of Imperial comradeship that this intercourse was beginning to assume. This concerned the attitude Napoleon insisted on adopting toward the unfortunate King of Prussia, Alexander's late ally.

During the long interview of the two Emperors on the Niemen raft, the ill-starred Frederick William had spent interminable hours of anxiety. With a borrowed Russian cloak to cover the gala uniform he had put on (in case even at the last moment he should be summoned to the council), the unfortunate Hohenzollern had waited in the rain, with haggard eyes fixed upon the distant ark of strange covenants. Again and again (as he wrote his lovely Queen) in an agony of impatience he had spurred his horse until the muddy waters rose about his stirrup leathers.

Napoleon, so forgiving to Alexander, had nothing

NAPOLEON

but scorn for the vanquished Prussian monarch. Finally admitted to the Imperial dinner table at Tilsit, the latter was made to feel the force of the old adage concerning a third in company. His uniform offered the great soldier a target of ridicule: "*How* do you fasten all those buttons?" he was asked in tones of sarcastic admiration. In his dingy quarters at Pictupohnen, a neighboring hamlet, he complained almost tearfully to Alexander of the slights and insults heaped upon him. He refused for some time to take up his quarters near the "terrible Frenchman" — or to subject Louise to the humiliation of an interview with the Conqueror. The Tsar had advised him, in view of the more than precarious position of his kingdom, to make this supreme appeal to the palladium of Prussia — the almost legendary charms of the Prussian Queen.

Napoleon accepted with cynical gayety this addition to the councils of Tilsit. Concerning the exact nature of the "mystical friendship" that united the Courts of Berlin and St. Petersburg, he had always been frankly — and insultingly — skeptical.

This Royal idyl dated from the year 1802, and the first journey that Alexander had made beyond the frontiers of his Empire. It was at first a mere flirtation — "A species of intercourse," as Czartoryski remarks, "in which Alexander always took keen pleasure — and to which he was always ready to sacrifice much valuable time," adding the reassuring statement that it was rarely that "the virtues of the ladies

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

with whom this Sovereign dallied were ever placed in serious danger."

Yet this Royal interview at Memel had resulted in an "eternal alliance" sworn at the tomb of Frederick the Great. Moonlight and the lovely Prussian Queen had played a strange part in Russian foreign policy. At Bartenstein, even in the face of Prussia's almost certain defeat, the mystical pact had been renewed (complicated by a proposed Quadruple Alliance in the Tsar's most internationalist vein that ensured "the peace of Europe"). The spectacle of Alexander, "The Knight of the Swan," calling upon his "White Lady" to save her husband's crown, was a spectacle likely to make a special appeal to the "barracks humor" of Napoleon. We have Napoleon's own cruel version of the scene. He was determined to treat her merely as "a pretty woman." As the outcome proved, it was a fatal misapprehension.

For Josephine's amusement (and not without a trace of *parvenu* gusto) he detailed his first conversation with Louise:

She received me like a Queen — of Tragedy. Like some Chimène she declaimed: "Sire, Justice, Justice for Magdebourg!" She continued a while on this tone: a most embarrassing one. *Enfin*, I decided to change the note. I asked her to be seated. Nothing is so fatal to the tragic as a chair! I congratulated her on her magnificent necklace of pearls . . . and on her costume: "Is it crêpe or Italian gauze?" "How can you talk chiffon in these solemn moments?"

NAPOLEON

He let her talk for a time of what was next her heart, of the new frontiers and of Westphalia. "You ask for much; but I promise to consider."

After dinner occurred the famous scene: "the Rose of Magdebourg" offered and refused. In the end the Queen gained nothing — except the Conqueror's esteem. "She is a woman with a head — worth a hundred times her husband." He now was ready to believe even in her virtue. Yet, as he wrote archly to the Empress, "To be gallant would have been costly."

On the very afternoon of his interview with Louise, he directed the astute M. Talleyrand (summoned in haste from Paris to tie up any "loose knots" in the bargain his master had imposed on the Tsar) to sign the final treaty. Prussia, not Russia paid the price of the unfortunate "Crusade" of Austerlitz. From fifteen million inhabitants, the loyal subjects of the Queen were reduced to ten million. She learned the details through a scribbled note from Frederick William handed to her while dressing to dine with the Emperors. The blow fell but the harder, for being unexpected. Conscious of the impression her beauty had made on Napoleon, she had returned from their first interview in the highest spirits. In recounting to her ladies the events of the day she had even expressed an intention of moving her quarters to Tilsit. She wished to continue her "conquest." But the King's message had been briefly terrifying: "All is changed," he wrote, "and the conditions are awful."

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

From Count Goltz, who had signed the treaty, she learned that Napoleon had been at some pains to explain the merely "polite phrases" of the day before. Realizing the awkward situation of his new ally, he had given the Tsar credit for his own "clemency" in not depriving the Hohenzollerns of their throne.

Every detail of the Tilsit negotiations has been preserved to history with a curious fidelity. Those who were present believed that this meeting of the Emperors was a turning-point in the story of mankind. Every word and every gesture of at least one of the Imperial protagonists were subjects of import to posterity. Even Roustem, Napoleon's Mameluke attendant, has left memoirs, and his curious appreciations of the occasion. It was the scrutiny of these pitiless diarists that the unfortunate Louise was now called upon to face. She arrived "red-eyed with weeping," and took her place between the Imperial accomplices. Of Alexander's conversation we have no record. Probably it was not worthy of immortality. Napoleon was in high spirits. Again the Queen's taste in dress became the subject of his Jovian badinage. (She wore a magnificent Court costume of "scarlet and gold" topped with a "newly fashionable turban.") His compliments furnished her with the occasion for at least one well-placed shaft of outraged malice. "Has the Queen of Prussia forgotten," the Emperor asked, "that the Tsar is at war with the Turks?" "No, Sire. But I am courting Roustem

NAPOLEON

now!” Alexander must have staggered under the thrust!

“I have been cruelly deceived in this house,” she said, on leaving, to Duroc (another recorder of minor history). He pitied and admired her. Yet, unknown to Louise, her revenge perhaps dated from the moment of this senseless mortification. Napoleon’s heavy-handed diplomacy had disregarded a factor in the situation that must have made it an intolerable ordeal for Alexander: the oaths sworn at the tomb of Frederick the Great, as events proved, bound her “Knight” to a fickle but effectual service. By Napoleon’s own admission the wiles of Louise’s feminine diplomacy were “too dangerous to be trifled with.” Yet in the brutal disillusion that he prepared for the partners of this mystical tryst, there was no consideration for even the decencies of *mise en scène*. Imponderable sentiments that he turned to barracks-room jesting with his young aides-de-camp were undeniably to play a part in the rupture of the Alliance.

From the moment Alexander left Tilsit, the influence of Louise was exercised to the scornful detriment of the “personal” ascendancy Napoleon had so carefully cultivated. With respect to the Tsar’s true sentiments toward his ally a curious side-light is thrown by a hastily scribbled note written to a member of the Imperial family. “At Tilsit I left Napoleon all smiles,” he wrote to his sister, the Grand Duchess Catherine. “He who smiles last smiles best.”

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

III

REGARDING the diplomacy of the Conqueror at Tilsit, even his friendliest critics are agreed: "Alexander smothered him with his flattery. His youth, his exaltation, his caressing voice," all disarmed Napoleon. "Both were deceived, but the Tsar of Russia was the least illusioned of the two."

Asked at St. Helena to name the happiest epoch of his life, Napoleon answered: "At Tilsit with my Court of Kings and Emperors." If true, the exile's illusions were strangely persistent. In this diplomatic duel it was the "Northern Sphinx" who triumphed. Napoleon admitted his own personal defeat at a later day and railed bitterly at Alexander as "that Byzantine Greek."

In the major factors Napoleonic diplomacy was equally at fault. The creation of a French Grand Duchy of Warsaw was "a germ of death" that the treaty carried in its vitals from the moment of its birth. The mutual engagement against Great Britain, keyed to the familiar "international" formula of "the Freedom of the Seas," was a death-blow to Russian commerce, although the aid the Tsar's fleet could afford the "Continental System" was negligible. Prussia, and the Tsar's royal friendships, had been sacrificed. The vague promises of Alexandrine conquests in the Orient were never fulfilled. The Tsar's hand reaching out toward

NAPOLEON

Constantinople was remorselessly held back from what Napoleon declared to be the "Key of the World."

The years between Tilsit (1807) and the second conference of the Emperors at Erfurt (1808) form the critical period of the Napoleonic *Épopée*. To Alexander, still cherishing his dreams of an "organized Europe," was offered the impossible rôle of "mediator" between France and Great Britain. Napoleon, ranting to the world of British tyranny, tried to place his hatred of England on the grounds of international law. "Posterity," he thundered in unconscious bathos, "would never forgive our acceptance of the infamous principle . . . that the flag does not protect the merchandise." But his methods to remedy the wrong were even more illegal. In "imposing" his diplomacy of blockade appears (as Sorel remarks) "the fundamental error of the Continental System." The blockade was the ruin of the free commerce of the civilized world. To close the iron circle that he believed must choke Great Britain to her knees, he determined to close the ports of Portugal. But the march of Murat's feeble armies of "brigaded children," the ragged fruit of the "conscriptions," while successful in the main issue, revealed to Spain the unsuspected weakness of the "invincible armies."

At all hazards, Napoleon realized, the Tsar must be held true to the "Tilsit Plan." Once more, though reluctantly, the Napoleonic orchestra faintly took up the tune of an "Oriental March." Caulaincourt at

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

St. Petersburg was authorized to negotiate concerning the matter which the Tsar refers to as "le Grand Objet" of the Alliance. But the Russian dream, a Slav Empire at Constantinople, still terrified the French. As a last resort (Napoleon still believed it infallible) his old policy of "personal diplomacy" was resumed. He determined once more to renew his appeal to the "friendly loyalty" of the Tsar.

Every detail of the Erfurt interview was carefully staged by Napoleon himself. "Alexander must be dazzled," he told Talleyrand. This histrionic diplomacy was to result in a magnificent series of *tableaux vivants*, an apotheosis of the Napoleonic Legend. He proposed to present himself to Alexander surrounded by the Rhine Princes of the "Federation" whose fate he had attached to his own. The King of Bavaria, of Saxony, and of Württemberg were invited to pay their court. Without waiting for further summons, the minor "princelets" of the old Holy Roman Empire poured into the little town. "They arrive one by one and in tribal bands." The highroads were blocked with their cumbrous equipages and old-fashioned liveries. Their "*chamberlains*" and "*écuyers*" were lodged in the garrets along the way. "*L'ancien régime*" bowed down to the "new nobility" of the Imperial Armies, "lodged on the parlor-floor."

From the moment that the Tsar crossed the Vistula into the provinces still occupied by the French armies, he saw on all sides French uniforms. By

NAPOLEON

Napoleon's orders the most splendidly equipped regiments of the Guard had garrisoned the path that he was to follow. While the Autocrat of Russia journeyed to the rendezvous in a light "Berlin," without escort, the Emperor of the French, in a sumptuous traveling carriage, was accompanied by a galloping honor-guard of lancers. The countryside was filled with gaping peasantry come to view the pageant.

*"Mes enfants, dans ce village
Suivi des rois il passa."*

Erfurt, a little Saxon center "of bureaucrats and functionaries," was transformed in a few days. Following an invasion of soldiers who were to garrison the old fortress came an army of "workmen and upholsterers." Great baggage wagons appeared filled with "precious furniture, rare hangings, bronzes and statues," that turned the little mediæval town into a "city of palaces." It was a new "Field of the Cloth of Gold." The eagles of the Empire (in stucco) perched among the friendly storks on the high gables of the Rathhaus, and its walls were hung with the Napoleonic bees.

To amuse the royal guests and even to play a curious rôle in forwarding the negotiations, there was a *levée en masse* of the *Comédie Française*. "Thirty-seven principals," besides the necessary prompters, scene-shifters, and supers, were mobilized by Napoleon's orders. A *gala* was given in honor of Alexander's

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

arrival. The piece chosen was Voltaire's "*Œdipe*," and when the familiar verse was reached,

"L'amitié d'un grand homme est un bienfait des dieux,"

the Tsar rose and shook Napoleon warmly by the hand. The "*parterre*" of kings burst into unrestrained applause. The same ovation was repeated a few nights later when, during a representation of "*La Mort de César*," the incomparable Talma thundered out:

"Sur l'univers soumis regnons sans violence."

So successful was the effect of this *politique de théâtre* that the lovely Mlle. Georges was ordered to follow the Tsar to St. Petersburg, where she became a useful ally to Caulaincourt, the French Ambassador.

The halcyon days of diplomacy were about to dawn. The mastery of Europe was to be decided about the green-covered council tables, or in secret conferences, rather than on the battle-field. In the negotiations which followed Erfurt, the masterminds of Metternich and Talleyrand were to weave Gordian knots through which even Napoleon's sharp sword could not cut its way. The last interview of the Emperors was but the prelude to the long series of international congresses: Vienna, Aix-la-Chapelle, Troppau, Laybach, and Verona, wherein the principals present were soon to play rôles far different from those for which they were cast by the Imperial Impresario.

NAPOLEON

From his actions, it appears certain that Napoleon realized less clearly than his ally the changed conditions which surrounded the interview. To the Emperor, Erfurt was but a reaffirmation of Tilsit. The Tsar, on the contrary, welcomed this opportunity to express his disillusion, to modify, and even to retract, certain policies he had accepted under the pressure of a military necessity. Always keenly alive to the intrigues and cabals that surrounded his own person, he was struck from the first by an atmosphere of deliberate, meditated treachery affecting the counselors of the French Emperor.¹ At their first private meeting, Talleyrand offered the Tsar the incense of one of his most celebrated aphorisms. "The French nation is civilized," he ventured. "Its ruler is not. The Sovereign of Russia is civilized, his people are barbarians. It is, therefore, the duty of the ruler of Russia to become the ally of the French people." No more definite invitation to counter-proposals involving treachery to his master's throne could have been hoped for from one so cautious!²

The formal results of the interview of Erfurt were, however, mainly satisfactory to Napoleon. By both Emperors, England was recognized "as the common enemy and the enemy of the Continent," and, by the terms of a formal instrument, was summoned to recognize "a scheme of European partition." While Napoleon welcomed the idea of "a war to secure the

¹ Lord Holland.

² Rain.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

tranquillity of Europe," Alexander desired an offer of "real peace" requiring no further military operations on his part. The difference was irreconcilable.

On the 12th of October, 1808, Champagny and Roumiantzov signed a convention which both parties were to hold secret. The Emperors renewed their alliance and engaged to make "peace and war in common." They also agreed to follow a common diplomatic course — which again included an impossible offer of Russian "mediation" to England.

Following the signature of this agreement, the two Emperors parted — for the last time. The same gorgeous military ceremonial accompanied their farewells that had marked their entry into the improvised "capital of the world" three weeks before. Napoleon accompanied the Tsar a few miles on his journey toward Weimar. At the last moment both allies exchanged a few words, ending in a "prolonged, significant handshake." On the return journey Napoleon walked his horse almost to the gates of Erfurt. His impatient staff noted that he was lost in a profound reverie, "*nuancée de tristesse*."

The Franco-Russian Alliance was soon to enter its final phase. Princess Radziwill, who saw Alexander on his return journey across Poland, noted that the "mysterious smile" that played about his lips was more convincingly gay than usual. "His stay at Erfurt and his conversations with Talleyrand had given the Tsar added confidence." He seemed con-

NAPOLEON

vinced that "his influence would curb Napoleon's plans of conquest, and maintain the peace of Europe."

Alexander, in happy possession of the diplomatic prizes assured him at the Erfurt Conference — "lost interest" in foreign affairs. The interior economy of his great Empire required all his attention, notably the new projects for a constitution that he was now busily elaborating. He asked Napoleon, exasperated beyond endurance, "for lessons in government" and "the loan of experts." The "strong language" to Germany and Austria, which Napoleon urged, was not forthcoming. Then a significant event occurred.

The King and Queen of Prussia visited St. Petersburg. The Queen's toilettes, Caulaincourt reported, were considered "*risqués*," and her "overtures" to Alexander caused not a little scandal at Court. The Tsar had "spoken" but twice to the King of politics — and preached "submission" to Frederick William (at least so the Ambassador was assured). But the presence of this Royal couple at the Court of his ally recalled to Napoleon unpleasant memories of Tilsit. Four years after Austerlitz, Alexander's friendship for the Hohenzollerns was again the "hope of Germany." ¹

With the unpopular Spanish war on his hands, with an exhausted treasury, Napoleon was obliged (with-

¹ Sorel.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

out securing any promise of definite aid from Alexander) to set his terrible fighting machine once more in motion threatening Vienna. Everything now stood in Austria's favor, everything except Austria's Archduke generals and Napoleon's matchless genius for war. After the victory of Wagram, he scarcely took pains to invite his Russian ally to the councils that were once more to settle the "peace of Europe." Golytzine's campaign (a belated recognition by Alexander of his "duties" under the terms of the Alliance) had been "a masterpiece of inactivity." Napoleon, who possessed to a supreme degree the sentiment of battle-field loyalty, could scarcely restrain his disgust.

Meanwhile the slow "treason" of Alexander to the Dual Alliance was becoming daily more evident. John Quincy Adams, whom Madison had sent to the Tsar's Court as the first fully accredited American Envoy in St. Petersburg, was among the first to remark this trend. In his long journey through the blockading squadrons of Great Britain and Denmark he had had ample opportunity of judging for himself the inconveniences of the "Continental System," especially to the allies of Napoleon. The United States had profited by her neutrality to become the chief "carrying nation" of the world. Before the adventure ended, Adams had been besought by more than thirty American shipowners to intervene on their behalf at St. Petersburg and to se-

NAPOLEON

cure their release from the harbors of Alexander's ally, the Danish King.

Arriving at his post, he found that his complaints received attention "in the highest quarters." In spite of the opposition of the French Ambassador and the Francophile Roumiantzov, the Tsar opened the port of Archangel to American vessels. He assured Adams that he had made "personal representations to the French Emperor respecting his fellow citizens."¹ Napoleon's answer was an indignant tirade against the "six hundred American vessels afloat in the Baltic, with false papers and goods of British origin."

To American shipowners and merchants, as well as to the disillusioned patriots of the "oppressed nationalities," the Russian Tsar presented himself in the guise of a defender. The heir of Catherine the Great became a "Symbol of European Liberty," while the ex-revolutionary general, lost in his Imperial reveries, assumed the ungrateful task of Cæsarean reaction.

IV

RECENT French historians, notably Sorel and Vandal, have told in detail the story of the epic struggle between Napoleon and Alexander that followed the rupture of the Tilsit Alliance. Everywhere in their pages the glory of the vanquished outshines that of the victor. Nor, in their revived enthusiasm for the

¹ Schalck.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

“Imperial Legend,” have they allowed even scant justice to what, in our own time, may well appear to be the most significant feature of the long campaign that ended in the downfall of the French Colossus: Alexander’s reiterated determination to dedicate the victories of the Grand Alliance to the end of securing “an organized peace.” This was the same constructive programme that had moved him to precede the campaign of Austerlitz by a Treaty of Concert setting forth his international aims.

The Grand Army which Napoleon had assembled to recall to the Tsar the promises of Tilsit and Erfurt inaugurated the modern system of warfare — the mobilization of “irresistible” numbers. His military genius was confronted with new problems at every turn, and among the tremendous technical details of provisioning and directing the routes of march for his host he remained serene and confident. But respecting the diplomacy of the Russian campaign (as he subsequently admitted at St. Helena) a general plan was lacking. “On my flanks I left the two uncertain Powers of Prussia and Austria.” This appreciation, in the military language he generally applied to diplomatic situations, was inexact. There was nothing uncertain about the policy of either of these Powers — in the face of possible defeat. Austria he might believe bound by his alliance with the Hapsburgs. But the imposed alliance with Prussia — although a Prussian corps of mercenaries marched

NAPOLEON

with the French troops — was a hollow mockery. All the weakness of his Imperial diplomacy appears in a remarkable admission to Las Cases after his exile: "I never intended to fight Alexander."

To these vague ambitions of conquest the Tsar opposed a definite diplomatic plan. Bernadotte, on whose military assistance Napoleon had reckoned, became instead the first ally of the Russians. The price of this defection was a tacit approval of Sweden's ambition to take possession of Norway — an agreement strangely at variance with Alexander's international "idealism." In the correspondence between the Tsar and this new ally appears the first expression of the plan that was to unite Europe against the "oppressor." Their common task, the Tsar affirms, is "to revive in Europe the régime of liberal ideas and to save her from the abyss of barbarism to which she seems hurrying."

A treaty of "Peace and Alliance" with Great Britain was hailed with delight by the merchants of St. Petersburg. There was, to be sure, no renewal of the terms of the "Treaty of Concert," the generous plans for a "New Order" in Europe that had preceded Novosiltzov's negotiations with Pitt and the earlier coalition against Napoleon. But to his advisers the Tsar talked freely of his interrupted "internationalist" dreams and of "cette pauvre humanité," so long and so unmercifully oppressed. The "rights of nationality," first championed, then trampled under

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

foot by Napoleon, were again to become the object of a renewed crusade.

At Smolensk — in the path of the Russian army, slowly retiring toward Moscow according to a well-conceived plan — the Tsar received Zea Bermudez, the Envoy of the Spanish Cortes, with whom a Treaty of Alliance was signed on July 20th. At the opposite ends of Europe the standard of revolt against Napoleon's tyranny had been raised.

On the 11th of September, false rumors reached St. Petersburg of Napoleon's defeat; but on the 18th the news was confirmed that Kutusov had abandoned Moscow to the enemy. A month of terrible anxiety ensued. The Tsar was implored by his mother and brothers to come to an arrangement with the Conqueror. The anxiety of the French staff to sign a truce was daily more apparent, but Alexander remained firm. On the 25th of October, it was learned that, threatened by Russia's allies — the wind and snows of the winter steppes — the Grand Army was in retreat.

Even before Ney's last shattered regiments had passed the Niemen, Alexander's subtle mind was busy with the far-reaching schemes, long since prepared, which were to make of the victories gained but the starting-point for a renewed international crusade.

The heroic resistance to the French invasion which he had shared with the Russian peasantry had re-

NAPOLEON

vived in the Tsar a mystical enthusiasm for the neglected democratic teachings of Laharpe. Scornfully ignoring their rulers, it was to "the people of Germany" that he now addressed himself. To the former, the allies and accomplices of Napoleon, he pays his compliments in stinging terms:

The campaign of 1806, during which we were abandoned by our Allies, has kept us from all further relation with the princely slaves who betrayed their unfortunate peoples and fatherland to feed the insatiable ambitions of a man doubtless permitted to exist by the Most High only as a punishment for such Monarchs and their vassals.

We now appeal to the *people* through this manifesto in the same terms that our envoy will use toward their rulers. If these latter remain abjectly persistent in their system of federation, it is their voice which must be heard. Let Germany but recall her ancient valor and the tyrant will cease to exist.

It was thus with the peoples of Germany, rather than with their rulers, that the Treaty of Kalisch, uniting the forces of Russia and Prussia, was signed on February 28, 1813. The preamble of this treaty (in which may again be recognized the language and principles of the "Treaty of Concert") was a stirring call to war:

The destruction of the enemies who had penetrated to the heart of Russia was but the preparation for a period of opportunity now opening to all countries who desire to free themselves from the yoke of France. The time has come when treaties must no longer be considered truces; when, once more, these engagements

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

will be observed with religious faith and in that spirit of inviolability which forms the only basis for any true relationship between governments.

The first article of the treaty was a political manifesto of the Tsar's favorite theories. The second was couched in more usual and practical language:

The alliance between Russia and Prussia is an offensive and defensive alliance for the duration of the present war. Its object is definite: to reconstitute Prussia within boundaries which will assure and guarantee the tranquillity of both States.

Napoleon now learned of the overtures that Alexander was making to the Austrian Court. In the intervals of calling up the last possible tribute of new recruits that could be wrung from the unhappy French Departments, he wrote threatening notes to Metternich seeking to impose on that astute diplomat (who still believed in his military invulnerability) some form of military action in support of France. In contrast to this course the Tsar caressed and cajoled the Austrian Envoys at the Kalisch headquarters, with the promised advantages of a definite "European settlement." His favorite theme was "a European Congress" that should follow immediately upon "a military decision." Neutrality, or at most a strategic disposition of the Austrian forces, was all that Alexander required, while in return he assured the Emperor of his diplomatic support against Great Britain should that allied Power presume to

NAPOLEON

dictate to the other members of the proposed Grand Alliance. Lebzelttern was enthusiastic in his praises of the Tsar's "disinterested attitude."¹ All the latter's international formulæ were readjusted to meet the prejudices of Hapsburg policy — and to offset the hec-toring diplomacy of the husband of Maria Louisa.

On April 28th, Napoleon arrived at Weimar and placed himself at the head of his reconstructed forces, while Alexander and the King of Prussia took up their headquarters in Dresden.

The splendid discipline of the French armies had permitted the forces confronting the allies to resume the offensive. On the 2d of May, 1813, the bloody battle of Lützen was fought in the presence of Napoleon himself. Wishing to profit by his success, the Emperor sent Caulaincourt to propose peace to the Tsar Alexander, but the latter refused even to receive the former friend who bore these overtures. Alexander's reply was to the effect that no negotiations could be entered into unless the Emperor of Austria, still allied in name at least to Napoleon, was made a party to the proposed settlement and a guarantor of the peace. Austria was now placed in the position so long desired by Metternich; namely, that of arbiter between Napoleon (allied to the Emperor Francis both by marriage and the Treaty of 1812) and the Russo-Prussian Coalition.

On the 20th of May a new battle, lasting two days,

¹ Grand Duke Michael.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

was fought near Bautzen, and the allied Russian and Prussian armies were driven back to Reichenbach. Only the Tsar Alexander's indomitable will prevented the Russian army from retreating within its own territory. According to Metternich, the Allied armies decided to retire toward Silesia, because of Alexander's "desire to drive Austria into a corner and oblige her to join the alliance." These victories seemed once more to place Napoleon upon the pinnacle of military glory from which the Russian campaign had displaced him.

The French entered Dresden on May 8th. In a manifesto addressed to the trembling inhabitants of the Saxon capital Napoleon referred contemptuously to their houses "still decorated with the faded garlands hung by your maidens in honor of the Allied Monarchs." From these new headquarters, couriers were sent to the four corners of Europe, spreading the news that the Emperor of France once more wielded the scepter of world power. Even the Sultan of Turkey was favored by a special courier recounting the deeds of Ney's young conscripts!

Napoleon himself dictated to the Allied sovereigns the terms of the Truce of Pleisewitz (June 4th). It was probably a mistaken confidence in his ability to achieve his ends, by what the polite language of diplomacy terms a "double negotiation," that caused him to consent to this military armistice — in the end so fatal to his plans. "He flattered himself," Metter-

NAPOLEON

nich subsequently affirmed, "that he could influence the Emperor Alexander both by the choice of the negotiator, Caulaincourt, and by the power, which, as he imagined, he continued to exercise over the mind of this monarch." Instead of disintegrating the Coalition, the Truce of Pleisewitz — prolonged by the skillful negotiations of Metternich — served as a prelude to Austria's "treachery" to the French alliance.

After Pleisewitz, Napoleon's military genius ceased to be the dominant factor in the European situation. Diplomacy, with its bargains and balances, soon outweighed the swiftest strokes he was able to deal the Alliance. Even his victorious military strategy, never more brilliant than during this final campaign, was of no avail against Metternich's cunning. He met Metternich (at St. Helena he could only refer to the incident in the unprintable barracks jargon of his younger days), and after Frankfort was mastered in a military situation that seemed hopeless for his enemies. At Chaumont and Châtillon (where he measured his skill with Castlereagh, the despised manipulator of the "Golden Battalions" which were Great Britain's principal contribution to the campaign) he again went down in sordid diplomatic defeat. Everywhere the Tsar Alexander's politico-military programme of international action triumphed, and in spite of reverses the structure of the Alliance held. Napoleon's day, the period of a diplomacy

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

“imposed like military decisions,” had passed. In the councils of the Allies he found a strange new unity of purpose that defied his sledgehammer blows first of aggression, then of defense. Out of the “seed sown by Cæsar” had grown the “New Order” that was his own undoing. “*Ayant soulevé les nationalités, les nationalités l’engloutissaient.*”¹

¹ Lamartine.

III

CASTLEREAGH THE DIPLOMACY OF RESERVATIONS

I

WHEN, in 1806, Austerlitz — and the “Port Cure” for gout — killed Pitt, the task of saving England from Napoleon fell, characteristically enough, into the capable hands of two Irishmen. Both were of noble birth: Robert Stewart, who bore the courtesy-title of Lord Castlereagh, was the son of the Marquis of Londonderry, a great magnate of County Down. Arthur Wellesley (who subsequently became immortal as the Duke of Wellington) was an offshoot of the family which had produced the preacher John Wesley. His father, the first Marquis, had chosen to give the name a more aristocratic form. Both Castlereagh and Wellesley were born in 1769 — the same year with Napoleon. They occupied neighboring seats in the little school of Armagh, and this school-boy friendship was to serve them well at every crisis of their lives.

Wellington's great career as a soldier had little connection with Ireland. Castlereagh, on the other hand, “kept the brogue” all his life, while Irish politics and the curiously malignant hatreds they engender dogged and hampered him long after he had

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

passed to a wider stage. Happily installed at Cambridge in 1790, his father recalled him to Ireland to stand for the Irish House of Commons, and to bear a hand in his bitter political feud with Lord Downshire. He was elected to his seat after floods of money and invective had been spent on both sides, and sat as member for County Down in the same Parliament in which his friend young Wellesley represented Trim. In 1796, Pitt made him Keeper of the Great Seal for Ireland, and two years later — to his lasting misfortune — he became Chief Secretary for Irish Affairs. It was the year of Lord Edward FitzGerald's rebellion. Any Chief Secretary, in the discharge of his unpleasant duties of repression, would have reaped a harvest of hatred. Castlereagh was, of course, denounced as "hard" and "cruel," although in the light of more objective research he appears to have acted with rare leniency and unflinching patience. The year 1798 was not a time for half measures. A thousand French troops had debarked at Killala, and their successes against the British forces, who outnumbered them five to one, were enough to give the Government considerable cause for alarm. Lord Cornwallis (who was not without some experience of an unfortunate character with revolutions) counted upon Castlereagh. The latter was to support the military (whom the Irish did not fear) with the police (whom they held in respectful disesteem). With Lord Edward FitzGerald dying dramatically in



LORD CASTLEREAGH

CASTLEREAGH

prison and a still larger French expedition approaching Irish shores, Castlereagh's duty, as a loyal subject of King George, led him to severities that were never forgiven.

Castlereagh advocated the Union, and when this was accomplished in 1800, he sat for an Irish constituency at Westminster. He acted with rare courage in supporting the cause of Catholic Emancipation, but the FitzGerald episode had disgusted him with Irish affairs. When the adored chief of his party, Pitt (his hands full of the matters of the Continent), fell over a question of Irish local politics, this distaste but deepened.

Castlereagh served in the short-lived Addington Cabinet, and when Pitt returned to power he was made Secretary for War and the Colonies. His task lay chiefly in mobilizing the "Golden Battalions" of subsidy which were to represent after Trafalgar Great Britain's principal contribution to the Continental war against French hegemony. But when Pitt disappeared, the Whig Opposition lost all enthusiasm for the Tsar-Idealist's continued refusal to come to an agreement with Napoleon. With the slogan of "No Continental Entanglements," they fought all Castlereagh's plans for coming to the aid of the stricken Russians after Eylau. The result of this course drove the Tsar into the Conqueror's arms at Tilsit. The dangers to British commerce arising from a real "Continental System" became pressing. The Milan

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Decrees at last had meaning to the shippers of Liverpool and London.

More than ever the chief business of British statesmen was to oppose Napoleon. Besides Castlereagh, Pitt's successor, Lord Liverpool, had taken into the Cabinet another fighting Irishman, his brother-in-law George Canning, of Garvagh. This new Minister of Foreign Affairs characteristically spent most of his time in useless disagreements with his countryman. It was only when the Tsar's agreement with Napoleon had endangered all Great Britain's policies on the Continent, that Castlereagh and Canning sank their differences and voted together to send the English expedition to the Spanish Peninsula. Both supported Irish Wellesley—who was to play the final winning stroke in the War for Freedom—in his early difficulties with his military superiors after the curious Convention of Cintra (that sent home a beaten French army, safe-convoyed on British ships).

This truce between the two foremost "British" statesmen was but a temporary one. The rivalry between them was bitterly personal. Their foreign policies, in spite of the efforts of Canning's biographers to show Castlereagh as a "tyrannical reactionary," present a curiously persistent, if involuntary, parallel. Between them lay a paradox. Plain Mr. Canning, the democrat, was a scholar and a poet. Lord Castlereagh—as his opponents were continually reminding him—was but "a half-educated Irishman." Yet

CASTLEREAGH

Canning was always ready to charge his rival with being a "fine gentleman" anxious to sacrifice "the people's" interests to the cause of monarchical supremacy. Canning's hatred of Castlereagh and of the "privilege of birth" was perhaps the result of his own early associations. Though of excellent family, his widowed mother's *mésalliance* with a strolling actor had thrown him in actual contact not only with the lower, but with the lowest, classes of that calling until rescued by an uncle's bounty. His eloquence always kept the mannerisms of the stage. Certainly a "finer gentleman" Castlereagh showed himself to be in the final outcome of their quarrel over the "dirty business" of Welcheren.

The bullet which Castlereagh lodged in his adversary's thigh on Putney Heath was not half so effectual in eclipsing for thirteen years the latter's political ambitions as British public disapproval of what must be called "unsportsmanlike conduct." The Welcheren expedition was largely Castlereagh's plan, a variant of Napoleon's own scheme for a "surprise visit" to the British coast. The troops which were disembarked on a little island at the mouth of the Scheldt might have taken Antwerp almost without a struggle. To oppose them in the Emperor's absence there were only a few battalions of National Guards, and Fouché's "regimented lackeys and cab drivers" sent from Paris. Except for the unaccountable delays that assailed the ill-starred British,

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

lack of funds, lack of transport, lack of supplies, the monumental failure of Welcheren might have been a brilliant success. The Minister of War finally traced these obstacles to an intrigue of a political nature concocted, he believed, by his adversaries. To discredit him in the eyes of the electors, a cabal headed by Canning was working below ground. Such treasonable conduct was, happily, a commoner political move a hundred years ago than at the present day. Although the charge was never officially brought home to Canning, the fact that he was held apart from all share in the Government until Castlereagh's death lends color to the belief that the "judgment of Providence" on the dueling field was concurred in by a majority of public opinion. Castlereagh's political career never suffered from this illegal settlement of their quarrel. Canning generally remained in a noisy, ineffectual opposition until his rival's tragical end allowed him to reap the fruit of his diplomacy. Through his connection with the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine he was to retrieve his own reputation as one of Great Britain's greatest foreign statesmen. Castlereagh forgave him before the others, and on one occasion treated him with forbearance and generosity — even offering to resign his portfolio in the Cabinet in Canning's favor. But during the great years of Britain's struggle with Napoleon — when, to use his own words, "two years at the Foreign Office would have been worth ten years of life" —

CASTLEREAGH

Canning had no share in directing his country's policy. In turn he did not refuse a "eulogy" in his best style to Castlereagh when that struggle was triumphantly closed.

Out of respect for the feelings of those worthy citizens who might well believe that, with all Europe threatened by Napoleonic Imperialism, the two principal ministers of the British Cabinet — even Irishmen — might refrain from "shindys" of a personal nature, Castlereagh had left office. He returned in 1812, and further to mark his physical triumph over Canning, took the latter's old place at the Foreign Office. To these duties he soon chose to add a practical leadership of the House of Commons. This double task involved (as had always previously been held) work enough for two active men. In the end Castlereagh broke down under the load. But the power thus obtained was supreme. From 1812 to 1822 — although he never enjoyed the title of Prime Minister — the ability, not only of originating policies, but also of virtually passing upon and approving them, lay in his hands. Foreign affairs were the only affairs of real moment at that stirring time, and his decisions were those "of the majority of the House."

II

VIEWED retrospectively, Castlereagh's career as the diplomatic helmsman of Britain's foreign policy during the Napoleonic Era offers some pertinent exam-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

ples to the statesmen of our own time. The great problem that confronted him — often presenting itself in protean, almost unrecognizable shapes, yet always inevitably the same — was: To what extent were the vital interests of Great Britain *necessarily* involved in the affairs of the Continent? The demand of the Whig Opposition — like the “irreconcilables” of the American Senate to-day — was to “take the country out of Europe.” This was manifestly impossible in the face of a threatening triumph of the “Continental System.” Equally impossible was the idea of fixing a definite limit to British participation. The logical — if unheroic — programme determined upon by Castlereagh was a policy of “reservations.”

With England’s sea-power everywhere triumphant, the British Channel offered much the same military obstacle to invasion that the Atlantic now presents to more modern means of warfare. The British Cabinet clung to their policy of subsidy. Castlereagh was “The Banker of the Alliance.” Yet in every military agreement the “eventual action” that might be required was strictly defined. Castlereagh from the beginning held Great Britain apart from the “Federation of Europe” in which the Tsar-Idealist placed all his hopes of future peace. It was this policy, later adopted by Canning, that ranged Great Britain and the United States (the “Constitutional Powers”) in opposition to the mystical pact of the “Holy Alli-

CASTLEREAGH

ance" of "Justice, Christian Charity, and Peace" that was to end in such a tragical disillusion to all well-wishers of international freedom. The careful diplomatic genius of Castlereagh hovers over Europe at the present day.

In contrast to Pitt's strangely ineffectual military effort on the Continent, Castlereagh's policy was, from the beginning, notably successful. After Moscow he reaped the full benefit of his support of the much-criticized Peninsular Expedition and his determined championship of Wellesley. The victories of his old school friend, the future "Iron Duke," became more and more a factor in the situation. The splendid struggle of the Spanish people for their liberties became, as Napoleon admitted, "a running sore" that drained his resources at the crucial moment of his Imperial Adventure. When the "War of Nationalities" was unchained against the Conqueror, a small but powerful British army operating on the soil of Continental Europe gave the British Foreign Minister a voice in every settlement. At the Allied military headquarters the British representative, Lord Cathcart, held a decisive vote. With the Emperor Alexander's avowed intention to revive the principles of European conduct set forth in Novosiltzov's "Treaty of Concert" with Pitt, Castlereagh had little sympathy. The Tsar considered Kalisch, Reichenbach, and Toeplitz as links in the chain of his future great European Alliance. But to the British

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Foreign Minister they were but military conventions with, at most, the general terms of the coming peace broadly suggested and outlined. In the classical jargon of the time the Tsar was already the "Agamemnon" of a nationalist "Iliad."¹ But in the background of his Utopias Castlereagh sensed a new hegemony. In the duel between Latin and Slav he sensed the old struggle between the Empires of the East and West. If the "New Order" in Europe was but to end with the Byzantine Cross replacing the Crescent on the domes of Constantinople, England's own "Eastern Mission" was at an end.

Castlereagh embodied a definite policy in the instructions drawn up for his own guidance when he visited the Continent. "While the Alliance is not to terminate with the war," he wrote, the only *mutual* obligation Great Britain was free to assume was "to support the power attacked by France." While the Foreign Office readily admitted their intention "to connect their interests in peace and war with those of the Continent," they affirmed a corresponding determination to make sacrifices only "to reconstruct a balance of Europe." In associating themselves with the Continental Powers the British Cabinet sought only an "effectual concert" of policy (such as subsequently arose regarding matters of common concern between the years 1824 and 1863). This was the thesis developed in practice by Castle-

¹ Sorel.

CASTLEREAGH

reagh, to the ruin of the Tsar's internationalist plans. In the situation that faced Europe he wrote the diplomatic prose (as Alexander furnished the philosophy and Napoleon the clanging verse).

III

THE year 1814 announced the increasing military success of the Grand Alliance and the slow breakdown of Napoleon's brilliant defense. But the diplomatic differences separating the members of the Coalition became alarmingly apparent. It was growing daily more evident that to secure the defeat of Napoleon was less difficult than to preserve a policy of common action. Austria distrusted the Tsar's "idealism" toward Poland and his ambition to restore a "republican France." Prussia openly coveted the territory of Napoleon's German allies to the complete disturbance of the desired "equilibrium." In these matters Great Britain alone among the Allies was possibly "disinterested," except for her defensive interest in the ports of Belgium and Northern France. Her policy of subsidies, moreover, gave her a hold upon all the members of the Coalition. In January the English Cabinet decided that, in order to prevent the Coalition from falling to pieces, it would be wise to send no less a personage than the Foreign Minister to the scene of these diplomatic differences. Metternich welcomed Castlereagh's arrival at the Allied headquarters and was far from chagrined to find him

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

“only half informed as to the situation on the Continent.” This state of affairs the astute Austrian diplomat quickly took upon himself to remedy, and the basis of the “friendship” — subsequently ascribed to Castlereagh by the Opposition — was laid. There was in fact no great difficulty in reconciling British and Austrian policy. The situation which confronted the representatives of these two conservative Powers naturally led them to adopt a common course.

“Suggestionable” and influenced by the persons surrounding him, the Tsar had again taken as his principal counselors Laharpe, Czartoryski, and Capo d’Istria. The latter, a native of the island of Corfu, was almost as doctrinaire in his liberalism as the Tsar’s old tutor. Czartoryski, who had been recalled by the Tsar to his councils at Reichenbach, not only maintained his master’s enthusiasm for a “free” Poland, but in following this aim recalled the internationalist projects which had resulted in Novosiltzov’s Mission.

Fortunately, Pozzo di Borgo, while attached as the Tsar’s representative to the person of the Crown Prince of Sweden, had become completely disgusted with the latter’s pretensions. But the “republican” influence of the Tsar’s advisers was sufficient to give cause for grave embarrassment to the representatives of England and Austria. Metternich “learned from certain reliable and well-disposed persons that His Imperial Majesty was greatly disturbed because of

CASTLEREAGH

the necessity of taking some definite resolution with regard to the form of government eventually to be imposed upon France. . . ." He complained of "the revolutionists who surrounded this monarch and exercised so baleful and decisive an influence upon his mind." Castlereagh's own reading of the situation was confirmed by Gentz, Metternich's principal adviser, who maintained that Bernadotte would "only destroy the hegemony of France to prepare that of Russia." Their common decision not to follow the Tsar's policy of "trusting the French people" prepared the way for an enforced restoration of the House of Bourbon.

Castlereagh's presence, however, brought a semblance of harmony to the councils of Langres. On January 30th it was decided to renew peace negotiations with Napoleon, and the latter was invited to send a representative to Châtillon. Spurred on by his fear that these preliminaries might debar him from entering Paris at the head of his victorious troops, Alexander hastened off to the military headquarters and decided to push forward the offensive with all possible energy. The arrival of the Tsar at the front gave a needed direction to the campaign and did much to secure the "unity of command." A letter from Schwartzenberg (written on the 26th of January) resumes the situation as follows: "We should now make peace. Every further movement toward Paris is against the rules of military science. Our

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Emperor, Stadion, Metternich, and even Lord Castlereagh, are of this opinion. *But* the Emperor Alexander . . . !” Words failed the horrified Austrian tactician in his attempts to describe the “infatuation” with which the Tsar pressed on his troops. The advance toward Paris continued; “the army dragging forward the diplomats, murmuring and conspiring.” At this time the British Envoy seems to have considered a “Russian” victory and the ensuing application of the Tsar’s empirical idealism as dangerous to a rational settlement as a survival of Bonapartism.

Castlereagh soon realized that it was in this conflict of selfish interests, ever breaking out afresh, that the enemy now placed his chief reliance. It was already becoming manifest that to find a common ground of agreement, should victory be achieved, would be a task almost as difficult as Napoleon’s overthrow. The French victories of Montmiriel and Château-Thierry caused these differences to be momentarily forgotten. The battles of Arcis-sur-Aube and La Fère-Champenoise, while restoring the military equilibrium of the Coalition, renewed the dissensions of their councils.

The *pour-parlers* commenced at Châtillon-sur-Seine (February 4, 1814) were the last attempt of the Allies even formally to make peace with Napoleon. The latter had chosen as his representative Caulaincourt (Duke of Vicenza), on whose personal relations with the Tsar Alexander during the days of the Tilsit

CASTLEREAGH

negotiations he continued to build an exaggerated hope. The Allies, on the other hand, sent only plenipotentiaries of secondary rank. Châtillon was in fact little else than a poorly staged diplomatic comedy whereby neither antagonist was deceived. Napoleon's eagerness to negotiate rose and fell with the varying fortunes of his military campaign.

"Napoleon always believed himself on the eve of a Marengo or Austerlitz." After a theatrical tirade, he had first pronounced "for a peace at any price," then withdrawn these orders by courier. Caulaincourt was wholly at sea as to the extent of his powers and was hampered by ignorance of the military situation. On the margin of his instructions the Emperor had scribbled the contradictory recommendation, "*Ne signez rien.*"

One ominous fact, however, convinced Caulaincourt that his mission was more difficult than ever before. The negotiations of Châtillon were carried out "under a general instruction" wherein the Allies "considered themselves as maintaining one and the same interest." This was the direct result of Castlereagh's understanding with Metternich.

Before the curtain fell on the comedy at Châtillon, an event of deep significance occurred — the inauguration of a new political system for Europe through the signing of the Treaty of Chaumont (March 10th). The signatures of all the Allied Powers had been

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

affixed to the same document at Leipsic. But no formal "alliance" as yet existed, except such as arose from a complicated system of politico-military protocols and treaties, notably those of Kalisch, Reichenbach, and Toeplitz. These mainly contemplated military action against the "Enemy of Europe," rather than eventual political arrangements. When the negotiation of a final peace became imminent, the necessity of consolidating the basis of some future common policy became Castlereagh's chief interest.

The preamble of the new treaty declared that "The High Contracting Parties, having proposed to the French Government terms for the conclusion of a general peace (in case of the refusal by France of these conditions), desire to strengthen the bonds which unite them in the vigorous prosecution of a war undertaken with the intention of bringing a close to the misfortunes of Europe." The main object thus clearly stated, the treaty then set forth its intention "to ensure the future tranquillity of Europe by re-establishing a just equilibrium of the Powers." The divergence between Alexander and Castlereagh became apparent in the clause wherein the Powers agreed "... to take defensive measures for the protection of their respective territories in Europe against all attempts on the part of France to trouble the results of this pacification." While this was in a measure the "mutual guarantee" which the Tsar had long advocated, its force was directed against France alone.

CASTLEREAGH

But in order not to raise premature differences between the Allies, Castlereagh consented that the "order of things which shall be the happy outcome of these efforts" should purposely be left vague.

Certain broad lines of policy were, however, laid down. It was determined that Switzerland should be raised to the rank of an independent state, that Spain should be restored to the Bourbons, and that Germany should form a federal union. In order to carry out these provisions, the means to be used were further set forth as "amicable intervention," and, this failing, an international army was to be raised, each party furnishing a contingent of sixty thousand men.

Formally renewed at Paris and Vienna in 1815, and at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818, the Treaty of Chaumont may be said to constitute the real basis of the "system" which governed Europe until the year 1848. A great change is observable, however, in the language of this document when it is compared with the generous sentiments embodied in the Kalisch Pronunciamiento that prefaced Alexander's final crusade. The liberal note sounded in his tocsin appeal to the "Peoples of Europe" grew faint. The diplomats of Europe, faced by actual conditions, could find no place in a formal agreement "for a League to maintain a European Peace," "based on a new conception of Public Law," such as Novosiltzov had discussed with Pitt.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

The Chaumont Pact was the result of contending forces, and drew its future strength and usefulness from the purposely vague language of the articles dealing with matters which were a subject of controversy between the Powers. But if the "future of Poland" was ignored, as well as the still burning question of Napoleon's successor, a "Balance of Europe" was at last definitely guaranteed over a period — which might be extended — of at least twenty years. Although France was the Power ostensibly aimed at as a possible disturber of this highly desirable equilibrium, the terms were general enough to raise the issue to the rank of a great European principle.

With this general affirmation of the solidarity of the Great Powers — a principle which he was to affirm with increasing enthusiasm during the ensuing period of European reconstruction — the Tsar and his *idéologues* were obliged to be content.

IV

CASTLEREAGH had been the controlling influence of the debates, and the attitude which he adopted from the beginning had been guided by the terms of definite instructions, which clearly foreshadowed the limitations England was to place upon her Continental policy. The Treaty of Chaumont was Castlereagh's; "My Treaty" as he affectionately called it in ensuing years. It drew its strength and prestige from its definite

CASTLEREAGH

military character. The diplomatic policy was purposely general, but respected British prejudices regarding undefined "eventual action." It was its author's outstanding contribution to the great problem of European pacification; *final* in the sense that he never departed from its studied terms. These terms guided British foreign policy long after his disappearance from the scene.

The tendency toward some form of closer international coöperation that now marked the close of the Napoleonic struggle has a curious similarity to the movements of the present day. During the long years of this first modern World War, the succeeding alliances against France had accustomed the nations of Europe, not only to take measures in common, but also to accept with unquestioned authority the decisions of what may truly be called "International" Councils, wherein the diplomats and statesmen of the Powers sitting side by side with the military leaders of the Allies had actually evolved common policies. Real power lay behind these politico-military discussions — the sanction of great armed forces in the field. The precedents formed during these deliberations represented a near approach to a system of World Confederation based on actual common interests.

At Chaumont Castlereagh's coldly logical mind had furnished the solution that had stayed for a time the inevitable crumbling effect of victory upon a military

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

alliance. His policy of "reservations" had boldly defined the sacrifices England was prepared to make. He had brought about a temporary agreement among the diplomats, each busily attempting prematurely to revive old claims and particularistic interests to the detriment of a common cause but barely won. But such a rôle, while constructive and necessary, added nothing to his popularity. At Vienna during the great Congress which was to attempt the impossible task of reconciling these contending ambitions, he was destined to typify the practical but unsympathetic attitude which the British Cabinet insisted upon adopting toward the affairs of the Continent.

Europe had been living in the thin, exhilarating atmosphere of a Holy War, a *jihad* against the despotism of "the Corsican." After the abdication of Fontainebleau there was a sudden descent to the familiar level of diplomatic intrigue and common suspicion. The value of a definite military engagement to prevent a recurrence of past events soon became evident to all concerned. The world statesmen assembled in Vienna—not excepting the Tsar-Idealist—were apt to disguise even their meanest ambitions in the language of a high-flown internationalism. To the British Envoy fell the unpopular rôle of a political realist.

His person, while handsome and even imposing, perhaps too readily suggested the "Britisher" of the caricaturist. Tall, spare, and lank, an unfortunate

CASTLEREAGH

taste for dancing, indulged with a certain solemn dignity, led to endless uncharitable comment. His "glacial air" was thought to resume the attitude of the fortunately isolated island to the rest of Europe. The entertainments of the British Embassy were eagerly attended by all fortunate enough to receive invitations, but even Castlereagh's lavish hospitality was a fresh cause for gossip and ill-natured criticism. Lady Castlereagh — buxom and accustomed to the admiration of her countrymen — was not "to the taste" of the Continent. She was accustomed to adorn her ample person with all the family jewels, not excepting her husband's decorations. This harmless innovation was considered a "challenge" to the misery and distress that stalked the streets of the Austrian capital.

While denied social success, and the popularity which he seems rather pathetically to have craved, Castlereagh's ability was nevertheless recognized by all his colleagues.

It was *his* treaty of guarantee, however, that became the rallying-point for a Europe menaced by the sudden danger of a revival of Bonapartism. Napoleon's "Second Coming" was timed to profit by the differences between the Powers that had risen in Vienna over the spoils of victory. A new grouping of the Powers had already occurred, aimed at the pretensions of the Tsar to impose upon the Congress his own doubtfully idealistic conception of a "moral

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

duty" toward Poland. The coldly practical terms of Chaumont were all that stood between Europe and a new fall into the abyss of war.

When the danger of a Napoleonic restoration faded away in the last charges of the Old Guard at Waterloo, renewed criticism was heard on all sides of the outcome of the Vienna Congress. "Universal expectation," wrote Gentz, the secretary of the Congress, "has perhaps never been raised to such a pitch . . . men had promised themselves an all-embracing reform of the political system of Europe, guarantees for universal peace; in one word, the return of the Golden Age." The attempts of the Powers at Vienna to set back the hands of time, to ignore even the undeniable gains of the French Revolution, were a disappointment to liberal opinion everywhere. There had been "no act of a higher nature, no great measure for public good which might compensate humanity for its long sufferings." ¹

V

EVEN in Great Britain the Congress had been viewed with universal expectation and the results were noted with disappointment. Yet, on the whole, Castlereagh reaped the laurels accorded to a statesman who has properly interpreted the "public sentiment" of his countrymen. In April, 1814, he was gratified by a eulogy of his conduct of foreign affairs

¹ Gentz.

CASTLEREAGH

from the pen of his old adversary, Canning. The former editor of the "Anti-Jacobin" was, in the main, wholly in sympathy with the Foreign Minister's "All British" policy. But a few years before, during the excesses of the French Revolution, Canning had lashed the apostles of the "New Morality," the "pink Bolsheviks" of their day. It was concerning these he wrote:

*"France at our doors, he sees no danger nigh,
But heaves for Turkey's woes th' impartial sigh.
A steady patriot of the world alone,
The friend of every country — but his own."*

To these followers of "Condorcet filtered through the dregs of Paine" were now added another group of humanitarians charmed by the rhetoric of the new "Internationalism." To Byron and Shelley — both "citizens of the world" — the Foreign Minister's cautious "insularism" was a cowardly abandonment of "Britain's duty." The latter, as they understood it, consisted in associating their country in restless interventions everywhere that "liberty" seemed menaced.

The rights of nations, Castlereagh continued to believe, were too newly recognized to risk the paternal interventions of an Autocrat — even a Tsar-Idealist. In 1817, in answer to the Tsar's proposal for a "general European disarmament," he suggested that this could best be obtained through Russia's "salutary example." While never withholding a respectful ad-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

miration for Alexander's generous schemes, he held steadily to his own conviction that the duty of every patriot was to place his country's interest before every other consideration. Without personal antagonism, Castlereagh and the ruler of Russia seemed fated to view every question of European politics from opposite sides. In theory, at least, he was in sympathy with many of the Tsar's ideals. It was his rôle to recall the realities of the situation to the *idéologues* at home and abroad.

Castlereagh's almost inevitable fate in his own country was to be criticized by both "internationalists" in sympathy with the Tsar's "exalted idealism" and the "Little Englanders" of his day. He was a meliorist, anxious for an improved "Continental System," yet never dazzled by "the vision of a Confederation of Europe." When the second great "European Congress" was held (1818) at Aix-la-Chapelle, he brought insistently forward the "international measure" which England had most at heart — the suppression of the iniquitous traffic in African slaves. Seizing this opportunity to forward their master's international plans, the Russian Envoys annexed to this humanitarian project a scheme for an international maritime police "with a rendezvous on the African Coast." Metternich even suggested that this "armada" might be commanded by the Knights of Malta, the last appearance of that picturesque survival of feudalism in modern history.

CASTLEREAGH

Castlereagh was now reconciled to Canning and received his welcome support in Parliament. The possessor of "four large Russo-Antique figures of Victory with palm branches in their hands," presented to him as a token of their approval by the Allied monarchs, he might also believe his popularity secured on the Continent. There was no place even in Cray Lodge for these splendid proofs of diplomatic success, and certainly no room for them in the modest cottage where Lord and Lady Castlereagh spent most of their leisure.

But unfortunately for the peace of mind of this strangely sensitive statesman, Castlereagh's popularity with the members of his own and the Allied Governments did not extend to the public at large. Even his own constituents criticized his "cold heartlessness." He had an unfortunate liking for "disagreeable truths briefly expressed." Many of his sayings were given far wider currency than he would have wished, and remained fixed in the minds of his enemies. One foolish epigram in particular — to the effect that he would rather "give poor people money to dig up holes and fill them up again than to pay them for nothing" — was used against him with telling effect by the writers, "Chartists" and "Repealers," who were swaying public opinion to the breaking point.

Unlike the mobs who imposed the reforms of 1832 upon the British Parliament, the starving radicals of the lean years following the Napoleonic Wars had in-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

scribed "Revolution" and not "Reform" upon their banners. Thistlewood's murderous conspiracy, the suspension of the *habeas corpus*, all helped to remind men of the ruthless repressions of the Irish Rebellion of '98. If Castlereagh was really possessed of ambition, "that infirmity of noble minds," his chances to rise to the position of Premier were hopelessly destroyed.

His unpopularity reached highwater mark during the year 1820. While attempts were being made to deflate British currency (processes and panaceas which recall those of a recent day), the agricultural laborers were starving in the fields. A committee appointed to propose remedies adjourned with a terrifying verdict: "There are no remedies." The Radicals offered as a solution a yearly Parliament and universal suffrage. Castlereagh barred their way, trying to cure a situation grown desperate with an issue of one-pound notes and intimations of an increased income tax.

With his Sovereign, King George IV, Castlereagh was even less popular than with the former's more or less loyal subjects. Castlereagh, as Caulaincourt remarked, was "just and passionless." His eloquence was that of a judge. His contemporaries failed to rate him as a genius, "because he had none of its eccentricities." All of these qualities were eminently fitted to estrange him from the Prince Regent after his succession. It is scarcely surprising that George IV

CASTLEREAGH

"was afraid of Castlereagh." The Duke of Wellington (who did not like "Prinney") wrote of him: "He speaks so like old Falstaff that, damn me, if I was not afraid to walk into a room with him." In 1820 he thought the King "degraded as low as he could be held."

But while a figure of blame and ridicule, "George IV was not a negligible factor" in British foreign policy. Castlereagh found himself blamed by the *idéologues* for his condescensions to Metternich, and by the King's friends for his refusal to share the burdens of the Continent. Both in 1820 and 1821 the latter were considerably worried by the thought that Castlereagh was gradually drifting away from the "Congress System" which had become the accepted method adopted by the sovereigns of Europe to set their respective houses in order. The ex-Regent, who had tasted authority, was suffering from a "suppressed wish" respecting foreign affairs: He now wanted to play a "royal" part. The obstacle in his path was Castlereagh, and the latter's unpopularity with his Sovereign (and his Sovereign's "friend," Lady Conyngham) was, on more than one occasion, a source of embarrassment to both.

But while Castlereagh held British foreign policy to a liberal course, he found difficulty in keeping in touch with liberal opinion. After the demobilization of the British forces on the Continent, which he brought about to the intense relief of the more affluent

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

taxpayers, a strong reaction against the policy of "isolation" set in in liberal circles. When the Grecian Rebellion was at its height, the "classical" sympathies of the time overflowed in criticisms of Castlereagh's refusal to intervene in favor of the "insurgent heroes." He became the target not only for radical abuse, but also in the Universities. Byron wrote of the "universal cough," with which Parliament interrupted his explanations. In a fever of indecent hatred that pursued its victim beyond the tomb, he sang of the "lone serpent" born in "Saint Patrick's Isle."

Castlereagh's chief concern was the Foreign Office, but his position as leader of the House laid him open to responsibility respecting the home policy of his Government as well. Shelley, reading of the popular uprising and massacre of Peterloo (August, 1819), wrote the infamous lampoon beginning:

*"I met Murder on the way, he had a mask like Castlereagh.
Very smooth he looked, yet grim, seven bloodhounds followed
him.
All were fat, and well they might be in admirable plight.
For, one by one and two by two, he tossed them human hearts to
chew
Which from his wide cloak he drew."*

Born of Shelley's half-baked political urges (in a taste which even his biographer's plea of "generous sympathy" can hardly excuse), piffing in sentiment, yet with the haunting lilt of a word-magician's verse, they may well have rung in the overstrained

CASTLEREAGH

mind of poor Castlereagh during his last days of reason. Under the burden of a load of official business no English statesman had dared assume before, his brain slowly gave way.

Except for the relentless pursuit of these talented furies, Castlereagh's tragic end (shortly after succeeding to his father's title and a few days before his departure for the preliminary meetings of the Congress of Verona) will probably ever remain mysterious. His policy was in full tide of success. He had just concluded his own instructions, in such masterly style that they were textually adopted as the guide for his successor, the Duke of Wellington, who was chosen in his place as Plenipotentiary. At this last important Congress of the post-Napoleonic Era, British policy was guided by his dead hand. Canning, with belated generosity, was the first to recognize that his own foreign "system" was inevitably that of Castlereagh. "England is under no obligation," he wrote, "to interfere, or to assist in interfering, in the internal affairs of independent nations. . . . The specific engagement to interfere in France is an exception so studiously particularized as to prove the rule. . . . *I thought the public declarations of my predecessor had set this question completely at rest.*" Then, with a burst of golden eloquence, he apostrophized the Government of that other poet-Minister, M. de Chateaubriand and the friends of Alexander: "*Every nation for itself and God for us all!* Only bid

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

your Emperor be quiet, for the time of Areopagus and the like of that has gone by!" Canning not only adopted Castlereagh's Continental policy as his own, but also pushed the doctrine to conclusions of which the finer-fibered individual would have been incapable. The term "insular" (which foreigners unfamiliar with the language sometimes confused with "insolent") flung at him by his opponents, in reproach, he accepted as a compliment. To this attitude of mind he allowed but one exception. Castlereagh in 1818 had asked for the coöperation of the United States, in a mediation regarding the South American colonies of Spain. Following this lead Canning now pressed for a "hand-in-hand" policy between the mother country and her eldest daughter. At Washington, Stratford Canning (who was but an echo of his cousin, the great Minister) discussed the matter with another diplomatist almost as crusty, and quite as sophisticated as himself. After several bouts of fine diplomatic sword-play with the Secretary of State, he returned to Great Britain to report. The result was hardly what Canning had expected, yet the American attitude was not displeasing. Mr. Adams's "insularity" was found to be fully equal to his own. The result was a course of "parallel action" toward the Continental Powers and the policy of the "Tsar's Holy Alliance" of "Christian Charity and Peace" that made possible the freedom of South America. Thus Castlereagh's formula of "non-intervention"

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

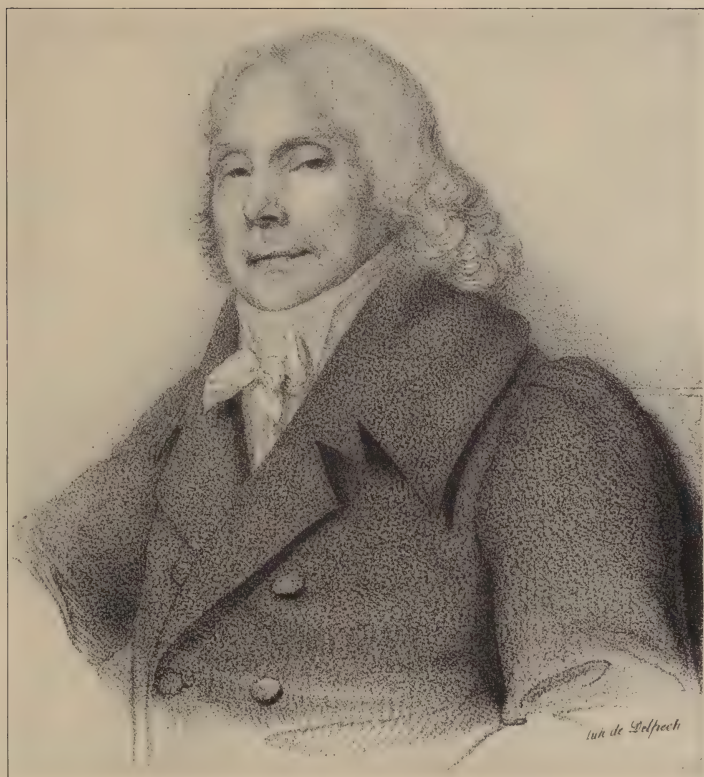
passed overseas, and with some modifications took the form of a doctrine that soon became the controlling factor in the development of a New World — that of President Monroe.

IV

TALLEYRAND: THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA

I

WHEN, after accumulating the dust of nearly half a century in the private archives of his family, the "Memoirs of Prince Talleyrand" were at last published to an expectant world, the general impression that resulted was one of deception. Instead of opening a Pandora's Box of revealing "indiscretions," the famous secret papers contained little or nothing that was new or even confidential. An official portrait, self-painted, of their author (as was to be expected) occupied the principal place: a Talleyrand with uplifted eyes and an artfully suggested halo that no one of his contemporaries would have recognized. But of the mordant wit, that had caused to be credited to Talleyrand every diplomatic cynicism of "The Age of Diplomacy" not attributed to Metternich, there was not a trace. The ex-Bishop of Autun had respected the secrets of the diplomatic confessional. The public, virtuously indignant at such treatment, lost interest. Instead of the rich harvest they had expected to reap, the publishers of the "Talleyrand Papers" lost money. A few remaining contemporaries of the author (some of whom, it was rumored, had postponed their demise in order to learn what the



TALLEYRAND

TALLEYRAND

fateful "Memoirs" might contain) sank peacefully to rest. The toothless smiles of these once-dapper young Secretaries of Embassy, who long before had gathered about the famous dining-table of the Master Diplomat, were a last tribute to that "discretion" he prized so highly as the chief virtue of his profession.

It was not, after all, in his literary remains that posterity could hope to surprise the secrets of a man whose favorite aphorism was to the effect that "Language is a gift intended to conceal the thoughts." Talleyrand was a human complex. He was, in turn, the Abbé Périgord, the Bishop of Autun, the Citoyen Talleyrand, the Prince of Benevento, and, but last of all, the Prince of Talleyrand of the "Memoirs." In all these avatars, as one who knew him well affirms, we must again separate the Talleyrand "*en robe de chambre*" from the M. de Talleyrand in "official dress." That a person of so many physical shortcomings took no pains to hide the obvious facts of his malformation offers a clue to his character.

For this curiously secretive being cultivated a somewhat embarrassing habit. In the days of his splendor he persisted in inviting his friends to assist at the most intimate operations of his morning risings. His daily toilet was called an "adjustment." First, the "luxuriant" hair, of which he was inordinately proud, was submitted to *two* hairdressers. The "ensemble of wavy locks with which every one is familiar" having been attained, the bandages that

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

confined the poor withered leg were tenderly unrolled, and the "limb bathed in Eau de Barège." When all these "ablutions of water and perfume" were terminated, his head servant, whose function consisted in "superintending the whole," came forward to tie the final knot in his pretentious neck-band. This strange ceremony was perhaps intended to impress upon his guests that he had nothing to hide from the small group he called his "confidants." A significant point: his admirers found that it was in "Court Costume" he looked "the natural man."

From a study of the many painted and sculptured portraits of this astonishing *charmeur* that have come down to us, there also is something to learn. Here the "adjustment" is even more complete. The twisted limbs are straightened by the artist, and the wry neck hidden by the high cravat. If there is ever a certain indication of the man's tortuous policies in the stilted pose (we might expect from him the instinctively protective methods of the physically weak), there is, too, a hint of infinite resource, above all, of unbreakable resiliency.

Again, in the level, forward-looking eyes we find another clue. We have the testimony of Napoleon — who used and abused his talents so shamefully — that Talleyrand — a disloyal servant — was none the less a patriot. The rapacious priest who betrayed the Old Régime in favor of the Republic, the Republic in favor of the Empire, and finally threw over Napoleon

TALLEYRAND

in favor of the restored Bourbons, loved and served his country. The Talleyrand known to America through the disgraceful Oriental diplomacy of the "X Y Z Letters," and the Talleyrand who for personal revenge was ready to betray at Erfurt the dynasty which had first raised, then abased him, never appears wittingly to have risked his country's safety to achieve his own ends. His strange conception of the rôle he believed himself to have played vaguely appears in the well-arranged "history" of his "Memoirs." Of his real conception of his own much-discussed "loyalty" there is no hint, and certainly no excuse.

Now and again some intended "revelation" (generally concerning minor details of biography) occurs in these disappointing pages. That anything should have been left to chance in the well-contrived existence of the future Prince of Benevento is almost beyond understanding. Yet, for once, even Talleyrand seems to have been at his wits' end. He had just been cast up by the tidal wave of the great Revolution on the generally hospitable shores of Great Britain, and the British police had indicated that in his case a further migration was imperative. America seemed the only likely haven, but information regarding the treatment that might be accorded a refugee of his category was wholly lacking. In an inn at Falmouth a moody-looking traveler just disembarked from a stage-coach was pointed out to him as an

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

"American General." He approached and asked him for details concerning his journey overseas. After politely listening to his request, the stranger arose: "I am the only American who may not talk with you concerning his country." He asked his name: Benedict Arnold. Undeterred by this omen, Talleyrand set sail on a vessel for Philadelphia. On entering the Delaware Capes, the packet crossed the bows of another bound for India. The day being calm, the exile saw in this incident an opportunity to change his destination for one of the French colonies. He asked for passage and was refused. As Talleyrand modestly implies in his account, it is upon such trivial interests that the destinies of man — perhaps of history — often turn. Had a spare cabin on the India-man been available, he would probably have ended his existence a prosperous trader of Pondicherry. The treasures of his diplomacy would have been expended in wheedling from Babu merchants some slight advantage in a transaction over curry, instead of guiding Napoleon at the most crucial period of his career.

He was deep in a transaction with some Philadelphia merchants, when the decree of the Convention authorizing him to return to France was handed him. This return almost coincided with that of a young Republican general from Italy. In Napoleon he joyfully recognized the incomparable "man of action" necessary to his plans. Through him "the man of ideas," barred by infirmity in a warlike age from

TALLEYRAND

all that makes youth glorious, recognized a means of long-sought expression. Almost tenderly he writes of their first interview: "From the first he charmed me. Twenty battles won became so well his youth, his pallor, his high glance." Talleyrand, the creature of Barras, was seeking already to rid himself of the monstrous companions who surrounded him. He contrived in every way to advance the fortunes of his *trouvaille*. The political adventurers who made up the first Directoire were making things "difficult" for Napoleon. To the suspected, undesired hero, so upsetting to their cabals, Talleyrand courageously threw open his house. The "world" of Paris, especially the more impressionable feminine world of the revolutionary wives and sisters, were bidden to an informal "triumph" for the "Corsican." "*Je ne négligé rien*," he writes, "*pour le rendre brillant et populaire*." Young Cæsar was touched and grateful. "Citizen, I realize all that you are doing for me. I have made peace and war to the best of my ability. The Directory must do the rest." Talleyrand took him by the arm and led him through the Republican Guards who barred the way to the dreaded secret councils. When the "whiff of grapeshot" of Brumaire dissolved the last vestiges of the "Terror," he was by his side, hovering in the background, everywhere, counselling and guiding the troubled diplomacy of the new régime. Their partnership lasted through a decade that was to rewrite the history of the world.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Napoleon persisted in his determination "to try to the extreme the fortunes of destiny" and to profit by the "irresistible logic of events." For a more finished programme he substituted the old faith in his "star" — and the matchless cunning of the ex-Bishop of Autun. This diplomacy was to continue successful until 1809. Only when Napoleon had forced him to play the part of a jailer to the kidnaped Bourbons did Talleyrand rebel. (The Emperor even indicated to the Grand Chamberlain that he had chosen the latter's château of Valençay as a "gilded cage" for Royalty, further to implicate him in the plot of Spain.) But, already, as Napoleon learned, Talleyrand and Fouché were looking for a "*Remplaçant*" — perhaps a king of the old legitimate House for France. His anger was terrible, yet even in disgrace he kept the Prince about his person. Talleyrand embodied the diplomacy of the Empire. He was fatefully indispensable long after he had been discarded as a false oracle. The soldiers surrounding the Emperor loathed his presence: "A silk stocking filled with filth," the faithful Lannes declared. Yet, scorning, distrusting, and insulting him, Napoleon kept the diminished yet ever dangerous Vice-Chancellor at his Court till the inevitable end.

II

THAT the return of the Bourbons was largely a personal triumph for Talleyrand is one of the principal

TALLEYRAND

theses supported by his "Memoirs." The assertions he makes are, on the whole, supported by contemporary evidence. During the fatal negotiation of Châtillon, in 1814 (while Napoleon, in spite of the brilliancy of his last campaign, was wasting his last chance to come to an agreement with the Allies by his blustering "military diplomacy"), Talleyrand was already entering into relations with old friends among the diplomats at the Allied headquarters. Austria was still believed to be "supporting" Napoleon, the Emperor's son-in-law. The Tsar, puzzled by French lack of enthusiasm for his own candidate, the Crown Prince of Sweden (Bernadotte), was seeking some "liberal decision" — "preferably an Assembly." He still maintained that the French people should have a voice regarding their ruler. Castlereagh, "awaiting instructions," had not yet pronounced against a peace with Napoleon's dynasty. Everywhere enthusiasm for the Bourbon exiles was noticeably absent. That the return of the "Martyr of Ghent" to the throne of his fathers was "inevitable" under the circumstances, became the burden of all the "confidential" information that Talleyrand's agents poured into the ears of any and all who would listen. Reiteration, if not reason, triumphed.

On the 30th of March, the Tsar Alexander and the King of Prussia were present at the final skirmishes before the gates of Paris. The absence of Napoleon — lost in moody quandary at Fontainebleau — af-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

fecting the fighting qualities of the military defenders. The civilian population offered little support. The two monarchs entered the capital, without awaiting Napoleon's father-in-law, the Emperor Francis, who from motives of policy lingered in the neighborhood of Dijon. Alexander did not hide his satisfaction at discovering that a large faction among the fickle Parisian population was ready to fraternize with the Allied troops. The beauties of Paris, clad in the abbreviated fashions that seem to accompany war, flirted with the terrible Cossacks of his Guard. The "Liberator of Europe" became the focus for an enthusiastic welcome. His progress through the streets of Paris was the signal for a continual ovation from the crowd: "All eyes followed him as he passed, mounted on a gray horse. He seemed to enjoy in full the glories of his position. No one could assume more gracefully or sincerely than Alexander the rôle of a beneficent Providence."¹

The first care of Talleyrand was to secure constant and intimate access to the Tsar. Metternich, in his "Memoirs," repeats the anecdote that he obtained this end by spreading a report that the cellars of the Palace of the Tuileries (where Alexander had originally proposed to take up his residence) had been mined by the retiring forces of Napoleon. This rumor Talleyrand, in *his* "Memoirs," takes equal pains to deny.

¹ Grand Duke Nicholas.

TALLEYRAND

It was, however, an important victory for the cause of Legitimacy when Alexander was induced to make Talleyrand's house in the rue Saint-Florentin his headquarters. Yet even Talleyrand found that to persuade the Tsar of a "popular" demand for the return of the old dynasty was not an easy task. Assembling the few remaining members of the Senate of the Empire (a body of which Napoleon had made him President), Talleyrand readily obtained from this faction a statement of their "desire" that the vacant throne of France be offered to Louis XVIII. With this somewhat dubious expression of the "people's will," Alexander was forced to be content. During the fateful days which ensued, the astute diplomat developed in daily conversation with the liberal Autocrat the principles he subsequently used to support his doctrine of "legitimacy" at the Congress of Vienna. This doctrine was gradually adopted by the Tsar as the cardinal principle of his own "policy" with respect to France.

The keynote of Bourbon diplomacy was to ignore past events. When Alexander visited the Paris mint, a medal was struck in his honor which bore on one side the inscription, "To the restorer of peace in Europe"; on the reverse was emblazoned the arms of France, with the words, "In the month of April, 1814, France joined the Grand Confederation of the Powers of Europe." Many months, however, were to elapse before these words had any real significance. The

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

real terms which defined the Allied policy toward France were contained in secret articles annexed to the first Treaty of Paris. These deferred all "final decisions" to a future Congress.

The Congress of Vienna, the first of a great series of World Conferences which for nearly ten years were to govern the destinies of Europe, began to assemble in December, 1814. "Never," says a contemporary writer, "had such grave and complicated interests been discussed in such a background of festivity." A kingdom was divided in the midst of a ball; an indemnity accorded at the dinner table; a constitution received its first consideration during a hunting party. Often it required no more than a *bon mot*, or a happy diplomatic phrase, to close the long negotiation of some treaty. The routine of diplomatic correspondence gave place as by enchantment to the polite forms of social intercourse. "Extraordinary missions passed from one Cabinet to another with unheard-of rapidity. Solutions to important questions were thus often reached in the course of a few moments." The quiet and still somewhat obscure M. Gentz, who varied his mysterious duties as Metternich's "intimate adviser" (the "Devil's Advocate" of all the devious plans by which Austrian diplomacy has supplemented so often the incorrigible ineptitude of her military leaders) by his instructive "correspondence" with any Foreign Office needing a little unprejudiced advice, wrote in his witty way of "the overwhelming spectacle." All

TALLEYRAND

the "most illustrious persons of Europe are represented here in the most exalted fashion." He, perhaps alone, refused to be optimistic concerning the aptitude of this imposing array of talent to bring about a "diplomatic reconstruction."

At Vienna, however, a new, disquieting factor in European diplomatic affairs called "public opinion" began to trouble the august celebrations of the sovereigns and their courtiers. Obscure German newspapers and pamphleteers — in spite of the military censorship and the Austrian secret police — showed a tendency to criticize. They pointed out that the occasion was scarcely one that called for so much superfluous feasting. The new "obscene" dance, the waltz (now openly admitted to a place in Court ceremonial), took up more time in the learning than was deemed proper. The war had broken down all standards of morality, and the high-born "flappers" of the Viennese Court, and their perennial mothers, demanded and received more attention from the assembling diplomatists than dull "solutions" and "compromises." The questions which kept war-worn Europe in a state of suspense were given more attention in Paris and London than in the temporary "Capital of the World."

In considering the failure of the statesmen of our own day assembled at Versailles to achieve a settlement even approximating the high hopes and desires entertained with respect to that more recent gather-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

ing, many of the complaints and criticisms concerning the *haute diplomatie* of Vienna fall to the ground. The earlier gathering, like the "Peace" Conference of our own time, had its "Big Four." Gentz spoke of the "dictatorship" of the Great Powers as a "theoretical injustice," yet recognized its necessity. These dictators, ably seconded by a corps of "experts" and trained diplomatists, were Castlereagh, Metternich, Alexander of Russia, and Talleyrand. The latter (a departure from the historical parallel) represented the hopes and aspirations of defeated France. The outcome was at least a European System. While satisfying to no one, least of all the Tsar-Idealist, the "Final Act of Vienna" and the principles it set forth was the basis of a vague "Law of Europe" for nearly half a century.

III

As Talleyrand realized among the first, the whole principle of a deliberative "European Congress" was but reluctantly admitted by the principals engaged. Metternich declared that the only advantage obtained was the "obliteration of physical distances." The smaller nations resented the system of "directing bureaus," which reserved all important matters for the exclusive consideration of the Great Powers (who, as Gentz, the astute Secretary of the gathering, pointed out, "remained till the last moment the real and only Congress"). The formal "Assize of

TALLEYRAND

Europe," of which the Tsar had promised wonders, was now realized. Yet it threatened to become little else than an assembly called to ratify the decisions of "an inner circle." In conforming himself to the actual conditions that he found existing, Talleyrand was to achieve a diplomatic success beyond his greatest hopes.

It was due only to the unrivaled diplomatic strategy of the ex-Bishop of Autun that France was admitted to a place in the early debates. His famous formula of "legitimacy" was later to form the basis of the principal solutions arrived at by the deliberations of the assembly.

Talleyrand, with characteristic confidence, had suggested his own appointment. The situation which he found existing upon his arrival in Vienna is explained in his "Memoirs." He immediately realized that the Powers were far from prepared to adopt the formula dear to the French Royalists, refusing to consider: "That a line of demarcation exists between the acts of Napoleon's Empire and those of the Restoration." ¹ "The day after my arrival," he writes, "I paid a series of visits to the members of the Diplomatic Corps. I found them all somewhat astonished by the scanty advantages they had been able to obtain from the Treaty of Paris. . . . All of them I found extremely cynical respecting the value of 'generosity' and more disposed to discuss with each other their

¹ Sorel.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

respective pretensions. Every one was busily reading the articles of the Treaty of Chaumont."

Talleyrand was struck by the fact that "nothing had been determined regarding the programme to be followed by the Congress." "Even the English," he wrote, "whom I believe more methodical than the others, have made no preparations along this line." He was also quick to see the advantages to be drawn from such a state of affairs. To quote his own words: "I contented myself with communicating my dissatisfaction to the Ministers of the smaller states whose interests are the same as our own. By appeals to the traditional policy of their different countries I recalled old memories of friendship for France, and they soon began to consider me their principal guide and support."¹

One of the first protocols adopted by the Congress in the course of a secret debate read as follows: "The four Powers [that is, those of the Grand Alliance] will agree among themselves *exclusively* with respect to the territories to be disposed of according to the Treaty of Paris. France and Spain will then be admitted by the delegates to pronounce their opinions and to raise their objections as they see fit." On receiving formal communication of these intentions, Talleyrand hastened to make the following startling re-

¹ Talleyrand. The "unpreparedness" of the delegates to the Congress of Vienna again furnishes a striking parallel to the more recent Congress at Versailles. See Mr. Lansing's chapter on the "Lack of an American Programme."

TALLEYRAND

joinder: "The title of Allies is no longer a valid one since the signing of the Treaty of Peace." In Talleyrand's personal dispatches to Louis XVIII we have an inimitable description of the scene which ensued. Having agreed to defer the opening of the Congress till November 1st, on condition that it should be "guided by the principles of *droit publique*," the Prussian Envoy shouted: "What have we to do with International Law!" The tumult ended by Castlereagh agreeing to support Talleyrand's contentions with respect to the legitimate rights of the King of France in return for his promise to adopt a less "disturbing" attitude!

The French Envoy now took a position — which he developed with consummate skill! — (a) that there actually existed a General Congress wherein all the Powers of Europe were called upon to take an equal part; (b) that, while he did not claim to oppose the formation of a "Committee of the Four Powers," this was only on condition that they should act exclusively in an advisory capacity and that their findings should be submitted to a general committee formed of *all* the Powers interested. To these views, already in inconvenient accord with the Tsar's avowed principles of "international action," Talleyrand had previously engaged Lord Castlereagh and Prince Metternich. Both of these statesmen were made to realize the necessity which existed, at least temporarily, of obtaining French assistance in coun-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

terbalancing the pretensions advanced by the Tsar Alexander and his satellite, the King of Prussia. This equilibrium could be obtained only by throwing into the balance the united influence of France and the "lesser Powers," the vetoes of whose Ministers Talleyrand now controlled. In spite of his position as the representative of a vanquished nation, backed only by the shadowy prestige of the restored House of Bourbon, Talleyrand was able, at the end of October, to write to King Louis that France had already regained her place at the Council table as "one of the Great Powers." The first use made by France of this diplomatic victory was to oppose, in the interests of "legitimacy," the Tsar's proposed settlement regarding the Duchy of Warsaw.

IV

It is scarcely necessary to underscore the curious parallel between policies and personalities at Versailles and Vienna.

"The Tsar," wrote Castlereagh, "has ceased to be guided in the question of Poland by his regular servants. It is, unfortunately, his habit to be his own Minister and to select as the instrument of his purpose the person who may fall in most with his views." The differences that now arose were to destroy the great opportunity, which (as he wrote his friend Golytzine) seemed to promise success for his "League of Peace."

TALLEYRAND

Talleyrand now found himself playing a diplomatic game of the utmost difficulty. In persuading Alexander to acquiesce in the return of the Bourbons he had secured a triumph for the cause of legitimate monarchy. In the interest of this principle he now found himself obliged to oppose another "divine right" championed by the Tsar—the right of Poland to nationality.

No one had awaited the formal opening of the great Congress with more eager anticipations than the idealistic Tsar of Russia. His brief stay in St. Petersburg had convinced him that he was once more Autocrat, not only by right of law, but also in the hearts of his subjects. Thus, it was, that, fortified by the knowledge that his acts were approved by the people of his whole vast Empire, the Tsar had proceeded to Vienna. Only his natural modesty prevented the Holy Synod from conferring upon him, according to the ancient Russian fashion, the title of "Chosen of God" in recognition of his victories. He was, moreover, confident that the debt which Europe owed him for Russia's powerful intervention in the late wars would make him the natural arbiter of the debates which were to organize a permanent peace.

Alexander was accompanied on his journey by a complete diplomatic staff. Gentz in his letters criticizes the Tsar's intention to negotiate in person rather than to depend upon the training and experience of

¹ Sorel.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

his *entourage*. His determination to do away with intermediaries had resulted in a quarrel between the Tsar and his Grand Marshal, Count Tolstoy. "Persuaded that his kindness toward him could have no bounds, Tolstoy opposed Alexander's appearance at the Congress. His idea was that the Emperor could only play an undignified rôle. Worn out by these representations, His Majesty . . . decided to part with his Grand Marshal." ¹ He had early reason to regret his neglect of the excellent advice of his diplomatic staff. The necessity of making rapid decisions amidst the heated debates of the council chamber deprived him of the advantage always maintained by a deputy acting *ad referendum*. This egotistical pretension to override the accepted customs of diplomacy was to place the Tsar, on more than one occasion, in a position of inferiority. Equally disquieting was his dependence on individuals like Czartoryski, Capo d'Istria, and Laharpe, personally sympathetic advisers rather than sources of information and counsel to which the traditional policy of the Empire required him to give weight.²

Talleyrand soon discovered, that the members of the Grand Alliance were loath to admit new influences to their debates. They preferred to consider the Congress as a Council of the Allies. As late as November 1st, one month after the assembly of the delegates, Metternich still maintained that "the Congress is not

¹ La Garde.

² Cf. Lansing.

TALLEYRAND

a Congress; its commissions are not commissions."

A few days later, he declared that the "very word of Congress terrified the Prussians," and that it would be preferable to call the conference together only after some agreement had been reached with respect to the principal questions involved. In other words, he proposed that this great "European" gathering should only be allowed the power of ratification after a division of the spoils of Napoleon's Empire had been made by the victorious Allies.

The Tsar's intentions were from the beginning distrusted by many besides Talleyrand. There was, indeed, in his policy a curious blending of international idealism and practical advantage to Russia. Behind all his fine phrases a determination was evident to draw profit from the military situation. "The only reward which I ask," he repeated with somewhat affected enthusiasm, "is to be allowed to repair in a measure the great crime committed by Catherine II." By uniting the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, endowed with a liberal constitution, to his own autocratic domain, he planned to restore the ancient Kingdom of Poland. England and Austria, however, were unalterably determined not to permit any change of frontier which might allow a Russo-Prussian *entente* to become a preponderant force in Europe. Poland according to their plans was again to be called upon to play her historic part as a buffer state.

Thus, when the Tsar, strengthened by his own con-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

ceptions of the debt which Europe owed in return for his sacrifices in the cause of the Alliance, formulated his demands, he found himself faced by a firm coalition determined upon refusal. A series of stormy personal interviews ensued; horrified rumor affirmed that in his conversations with Metternich strong personalities were indulged in on the part of the Tsar, and that the Austrian Envoy's rejoinders had been made in a tone of respectful but ill-disguised contempt. On October 1st, Lord Castlereagh wrote to the Tsar, setting forth at length his opposition to the latter's views with respect to the Duchy. This resulted in a sharp interchange of "extra-official notes," wherein Czartoryski was called upon to defend "the right of Poland to nationality," a contention in convenient accord with one of the principal "points" of Novosiltzov's "Instructions." This extraordinary debate, carried on by private correspondence, finally exasperated the Emperor, who refused to continue further negotiations by this means. Tolstoy's prophecies respecting the "personal negotiation" of his Sovereign were being fulfilled.

Above the clamor of contending ambitions and particularistic interests now sounded a new rallying cry, Talleyrand's famous formula of "legitimacy." This principle, indeed, appeared the only one generally applicable to a situation complicated by so many contending interests. One cause which had restrained Castlereagh from openly opposing the military power

TALLEYRAND

wielded by the Tsar was the fact that Great Britain was still embarrassed by the long-drawn-out war with the United States. With the signing of the Peace of Ghent (December 24, 1814), full liberty of action was restored to England's forces. Castlereagh immediately declared himself ready to adhere to Talleyrand's plans, and the latter had the satisfaction of concluding the secret alliance which he had so long desired to form between France, Austria, and England (January 3, 1815).

Thus, a few weeks after France had been dragged to the bar to hear the sentence of Europe passed upon her misdeeds, she found herself, through the surprising diplomatic abilities of her chief representative, party to a secret treaty wherein two of her principal opponents formally engaged themselves to act with her in common against "the pretensions recently manifested" by the two remaining members of the great Coalition. "In case certain circumstances shall arise," read this document, "from which may God preserve us, Great Britain, Austria, and France agree to unite their strength in order to maintain the principles formulated in the Treaty of Paris."

Only the return of Napoleon from the island of Elba restored a semblance of harmony to the debates. The alliance and principles of Chaumont were reaffirmed and all the Powers joined in a manifesto decrying the Emperor as a menace to the cause of Europe.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

V

"THE HUNDRED DAYS," the closing chapter of the Napoleonic Legend, left Talleyrand pondering at Vienna over the ruins of his plans. A dull pretense of continuing the work of the "World Parliament" still went on. But the sovereigns had dispersed about their familiar task of "saving Europe," and among the diplomatic small fry there was no belief that any useful measures could be taken until the "Great Question" concerning the returned exile of Elba had received a military solution. Waterloo brought Louis XVIII back to Paris "in the baggage-train of the Allies." Talleyrand was there among the first to meet him. But any hopes that he may have cherished that the kaleidoscope of history might again make him the central figure of this second restoration were quickly dissipated. The Royalists now looked to the regicide M. Fouché, the arch-spy and policeman of the Napoleonic régime, to hold the smouldering resentment of the Paris mob in check. Fouché had been the nucleus of any government that remained in the "capital." To please the bourgeoisie, he had reorganized the National Guard. To please the radicals, he had reopened the "Revolutionary Clubs," allowing their fanatic zeal to pass off in clouds of harmless rhetoric. Finally, to ensure a foothold in a possible Royalist restoration, he had, on his own sole initiative, opened a "negotiation" with the victorious British in the name of France.

TALLEYRAND

Talleyrand for a moment believed that he had the support of the all-powerful Wellington.¹ His old accomplice, Fouché, even appeared anxious to associate him in the task of "reconstruction." M. de Chateaubriand, who hated them both, has left a picture of "the two revolutionary cronies" leaving the quarters of the King's brother, the Count of Artois, "one tall, powdered, limping, and insolent, the other slender, pale, and grimacing." But Talleyrand had counted without the Tsar.

Alexander's hatred of the man who had opposed him at Vienna was in marked contrast to the generous and forgiving spirit he manifested toward the Bourbons and his own allies. The end of Napoleon's great adventure of "The Hundred Days" left the Allies in an awkward and ill-defined relationship toward France. A tendency was manifested to hold the twice-restored Bourbons responsible for their failure to prove the blessings of "legitimacy." Moreover, the rivalries and differences which had arisen at Vienna seriously separated the Allies. The secret treaty of alliance between France, Great Britain, and Austria — forgotten by Louis XVIII in his hasty flight — was known to Alexander. The Tsar, in spite of this proof of Bourbon duplicity, was still disposed to be lenient toward France. Motives of altruism, judged by his allies to be wholly exaggerated, and a kind of mystical piety (which, as we shall later see,

¹ Sorel.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

resulted in the negotiations leading to the pact of the Holy Alliance), now guided his policy. But the Russian troops had taken only a minor part in the Waterloo campaign and the Tsar found his prestige sensibly diminished. Talleyrand offered the convenient and necessary scapegoat for the unfortunate "secret" treaty.

In the troubled interval that followed the first days of the second restoration, no one disturbed the illusions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Talleyrand found an outlet for his talents in a vain attempt to preserve intact the great collections of artistic loot that the victories of the Empire had amassed in the museums and galleries of Paris. The first restoration had respected the doubtful title of the Bourbons to these trophies. But the irritation of the Allies, notably the Prussians, now led them to claim their own. Talleyrand's pretense to base "the claims of France" on grounds of high morality, his protests against the "abuses of the right of conquest," were greeted with derision. All that he now sought was a mode of dignified retreat, that "fine gesture" with which every French statesman with an eye to the future accepts defeat.

His curious personal vanity was never more apparent than in these *moments difficiles*. It was concerning his personal affairs, not his diplomatic troubles, that all the salons of Paris were agog. The Prince of Talleyrand was in the clutches of "*Un Démon de*

TALLEYRAND

l'Après Midi." With a somewhat ostentatious carelessness of more important things he feigned to be concerned with but one great subject: the departure of the fascinating Duchess of Dino from Paris. Limping in the train of this charmer, the great Talleyrand, "soaked in perfumes," confided his all-absorbing passion to all who cared to listen. It was in the midst of this belated idyl that the long-pending blow was to fall.¹

The terms of the Allied ultimatum demanded "the cession of territory equal to two thirds of all that had been added to the old limits of France" by the first treaty with the restored Bourbons. To this crushing penalty was added "six hundred millions of indemnity and two hundred millions for fortifications" necessary to preserve the position of the Allies. Finally, an Allied force was to occupy the frontiers during a period of seven years. Louis signed (September 23, 1815), never more royal than in his moment of national disgrace. Talleyrand the following day learned that the Tsar had declared that "an intriguer of the lowest category had sought to separate him from the Bourbon dynasty." The Duke of Richelieu (worthy wearer of a talismanic name, who during a long exile in Russia had served the Tsar as Governor of the Crimea) was chosen as the new Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Yet Talleyrand survived the blow. Fifteen years

¹ Sorel.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

later (when the irrepressible office-holder had wormed his way back to favor as representative of a fourth régime — that of the Orléans Monarchy — at London), he completed the “fine gesture” he had prepared in 1815. His “resignation” in the face of the Allied ultimatum was based “entirely on the humiliating terms of these proposals.” This statement, often repeated in his “Memoirs,” deceived no one. Only the “school” of young diplomatic disciples (who gathered daily at the French Legation to learn from their oracle the secrets of the already discredited, but still morbidly fascinating, technique of “*la Haute Diplomatie*”) were politely credulous. And to one whose whole life had been a “skillful untruth” their verdict sufficed.

V

MADAME DE KRÜDENER THE HOLY ALLIANCE

I

EVEN to her contemporaries the Baroness de Krüdener's rôle in the preparation of the strange document known in history as the "Holy Alliance" was a fascinating subject of controversy. The enigmatic heroine of this curious diplomatic adventure has generally been treated in their writings with little attempt at charity or understanding. Was this prophetess of Universal Brotherhood merely one of those "incidental characters" whose connection with the events of their time is largely fortuitous and accidental? Or was she really an inspirational factor in the Tsar's "League of Justice, Christian Charity, and Peace"? The importance of this reactionary agreement between the principal monarchs of Central Europe (and the fact that its threatened aggressions on the American continent were the chief incentive to the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine) certainly warrants some further inquiry into its origins at the present time.

From the later official versions of the history of the Holy Alliance the part of Madame de Krüdener was ruthlessly censored out. The exalted purposes of the

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Tsar's diplomacy were not, he believed, forwarded by his earlier connection with the "Lettonian Sibyl." When the crisis of his mystical religiosity had passed, he regretted the impulse that had led him to rely upon her "guidance." He was determined that her claims to collaboration should be overlooked, and if possible sink into oblivion. Yet the tragi-comedy of this spiritual friendship, freed of a contemporary growth of gossip and innuendo, offers no valid reason, except the Tsar's vanity, to be thus summarily forgotten.

In the first days of September, 1815 — not without intention of restoring the prestige which the Russian armies had lost by their absence from the glorious field of Waterloo — Alexander decided to display their well-trained strength as a diplomatic reminder to his allies. A great review of the entire Russian force was held upon the Plain of Vertus, near Châlons. This spectacle the Tsar had also chosen for the dramatic prelude to what he now considered the most important political act of his career, the manifesto promulgating a kingly "League of Peace."

On September 10th the magnificent troops of Alexander's guard and line (drilled even in war to a state of precision, for which the Emperor's "parado-mania" was largely responsible) passed before the Russian Sovereign and his guests, the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia. Following the straight files of the grenadiers came the turbulent



MME. DE KRÜDENER

MADAME DE KRÜDENER

ranks of the Cossacks, the wild cavalry of the steppes, whose exploits during Napoleon's retreat had given them a wide reputation throughout Europe. The religious ceremony was, perhaps, the most remarkable part of the occasion. On the broad plain seven altars had been erected, where the imposing ritual of the Greek service was celebrated in the presence of this reverent host. Their thundering responses to the chanting of the priests showed them ready to die with fanatical zeal at the word of their Autocrat.

Still under the powerful influence of this significant military pageant, the sovereigns present at the review were invited by Alexander to affix their signatures to the famous document subsequently known to history as the "Holy Alliance." On September 14, 1815, the Tsar, the Emperor of Austria, and the King of Prussia formally declared that henceforth their united policy had but a single object:

To manifest before the whole universe their unshakable determination to take as their sole guide, both in the administration of their respective states and in their political relations with other governments, the precepts of religion, namely, the rules of Justice, Christian Charity, and Peace.

These precepts, far from being applicable only to private life, should, on the contrary, govern the decisions of Princes, and direct them in all their negotiations, forming, as they must, the only means of giving permanence to human institutions and remedying their imperfections.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Following this unusual preamble came the terms of a diplomatic agreement, no less extraordinary in the eyes of contemporary statesmen:

Conformably to the words of the Holy Scriptures, which command all men to consider each other as brethren, the three contracting Monarchs will remain united by the bonds of a true and indissoluble fraternity. Considering each other as fellow countrymen, they will on all occasions and in all places lend each other aid and assistance; toward their subjects and armies, they will extend a fatherly care and protection, leading them (in the same spirit of fraternity with which they are themselves animated) to protect Religion, *Peace*, and Justice.

The language of the pact thus suddenly presented by the Tsar to the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia for their signatures had no parallel in the archives of diplomacy. In adhering to the Holy Alliance these sovereigns bound themselves to no policy more definite than a promise to observe in their foreign and domestic policy "the duties which the Divine Saviour has taught to mankind"; yet, as Gentz reports, they were "amazed and terrified" by the possible consequences of their act. Reliance upon moral principles so general and wide-sweeping was, indeed, to lead to policies and events unforeseen at the time by their author.

But in order to understand aright the meaning which this mystical invocation connoted in the mind of Alexander, it becomes necessary to consider some of the inspirations of the Tsar's "internationalism."

MADAME DE KRÜDENER

The strange company in which the Tsar spent his time during his stay in Paris had given cause for unlimited comment to the allied diplomats engaged in negotiating the Second Peace with France. Prince Metternich was not displeased to find that the Tsar's earlier "Jacobinism" had been forgotten in favor of "prayer meetings." His preoccupations amidst the company of "religious adventurers" relieved the Austrian Chancellor of many anxieties concerning the Autocrat's intentions to "liberalize" the twice-restored reign of the Bourbons.

Alexander's friendship for the Baroness de Krüdener and the band of "mystics" who surrounded her had, indeed, been the cause of some anxiety and mortification to his official *entourage*. He had lodged this lady in a sumptuous apartment near his own headquarters at the Élysée. By crossing the Gardens of the palace he could join unobserved the frequent reunions at which she presided. It was only after the sudden and startling manifestation of the Tsar's new beliefs at the Review of Châlons that political motives were ascribed to his new Egeria. It was then learned that the embarrassing situation in which his allies had been placed was due to his constant intercourse with these evangelical friends. On the eve of presenting his "Sublime Idea" to his fellow sovereigns he had submitted the text of his "Holy Pact" to the approval of Madame de Krüdener and her principal acolyte, the German pastor, Empaytaz.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Together "at the foot of the Cross" they had implored the Divine Blessing upon the undertaking. The Baroness followed him next day on the road to the Plain of Vertus, and in a pamphlet (which is to-day one of the rarest of bibliographic curiosities) became the self-appointed historian of the occasion. From a privileged place reserved for her near the enclosure in which were the Emperors of Russia and Austria and the King of Prussia, she watched this brilliant defile. She wrote: "Leading the Russian Host was this man of great destinies. He had been prepared long since through the centuries, formed for this opposition to the Man of Glory on Earth. He had conquered, yet was humble. . . . The Eternal One had called to Alexander and he had listened to The Voice."

II

ALEXANDER'S motives and opinions after the events just narrated were to become a deepening mystery to his contemporaries. Joseph de Maistre, in his subsequent search for some rational explanation of the curious language of the Holy Alliance — surely the most puzzling document which ever disturbed the routine of conventional diplomacy — declared it to have been conceived under the influence of the *Illuminati*. To this lay-Jesuit (the Envoy of the King of Sardinia at the Court of St. Petersburg) such an influence connoted all the vague terrors implied by

MADAME DE KRÜDENER

“Red propaganda” at the present day. The *Illuminati* were the “Bolshevists” of the religious world; a vast “sect” or secret association engaged in an underground war against all forms of established Faith. Religion in the eyes of the conservative statesmen of the Restoration was once more the foundation of thrones and governments. The *Illuminati* were thus engaged in a direct attack on public order. They were conveniently blamed for the French Revolution, for the growth of liberal agitation in Germany, and finally, by a not unnatural inference, for the startling manifestations of mystical internationalism which began to obsess the Russian Autocrat.

The early beginnings of Alexander’s “conversion” may be traced to the period of terrible anxiety that corresponded with the Napoleonic invasion. The “fires of Moscow,” he declared, “have lighted my soul. The judgments of the Most High on the snowy battle-fields have warmed the sources of my faith.” With the Tsarina Elizabeth he spent long hours in reading the Scriptures. It was the mysterious and shadowy language of the Apocalypse that especially fired his imagination. In the veiled warnings of its texts, he sought some symbol that might guide him through the “Terrible Night” darkening the whole future of his Empire. A lady in Riga (perhaps one of the circle of mystical *Illuminati* to whom Madame de Krüdener was later to owe her conversion) sent him a copy of Psalm XCI which he found

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

“filled with allusions” to his own situation. There was, indeed, something almost supernatural in Napoleon’s first terrible disaster. To the Tsar his armies seemed to play but a secondary part in some great providential tragedy; the fast-falling blanket of snow and the Arctic blasts that cleared the steppes of the last shattered remnants of the “Grand Army” were primeval forces whose significance appealed to long forgotten beliefs. His pursuit seemed to march accompanied by the “God of Battles.”

While the Russian armies were campaigning in Germany, the strange doctrines of political and religious liberty preached by the *Illuminati* appear to have made many converts, especially among the officers in the Guard regiments. The young Tsar himself was believed to have extended his protection to several members of his immediate circle who had joined the mysterious brotherhood. Prince Golytzine, who enjoyed his intimacy and favor, was known to be high in their councils, although openly devoted to the welfare of the established Russian Church.

This enigmatic figure had been a friend of Alexander’s “liberal” youth. While a young courtier at the Court of Catherine the Great, he had brought upon himself notoriety and not a little ridicule by an unrequited but burning passion for the Tsarina. Catherine’s age, to say nothing of her “preoccupation” with the favorite Zoubov, prevented him from achieving the not uncommon distinction which he craved.

MADAME DE KRÜDENER

From the pursuit of this idyl Golytzine suddenly turned to the study of religious questions. Some years later, when Alexander sought for a man of "broad views" to place at the head of the religious affairs of his Empire (disgusted by the narrow prejudices of the courtiers who sought for this position), he appointed Golytzine Chief of the Holy Synod. This post somewhat paradoxically placed in the hands of a religious liberal the whole civil administration of the Established Church. At the same time it became his duty to maintain a correspondence with the Tsar concerning ecclesiastical matters. A few years later Golytzine founded the Russian Bible Society. With the members of this group, largely composed of mystics, evangelicals, and not a few political adventurers, Alexander appears to have been in continual contact. In 1813 he finds time to write to them from Kalisch, while in the midst of the important negotiations which preceded the formation of the Grand Alliance:

In moments like these, I am convinced that even the most hardened feels a desire to turn toward his Creator. How much truer, then, must this be with respect to those who in moments of calm and tranquillity have found therein their greatest joy? . . . I have abandoned myself to the sentiments you profess. This has become a habit. I have abandoned myself, I say, with even greater enthusiasm than in the past.

In another letter, couched in the same tone of mystical exaltation, he writes:

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

The letter in which you informed me of the formation of the Bible Society has interested me strangely. May the Most High bless your efforts and your institution. I consider it of the highest importance and fully share your opinion that the Holy Scriptures should take the place of the writings of the prophets. . . . You may dispose of all my pecuniary resources for the necessary expenses of printing these Bibles.

While this crisis of religiosity was at its height, the Tsar appears to have formed some strange "spiritual" friendships. He attended the gatherings of fanatics such as those who gathered to hear the rhapsodies of the religious "medium" Catherine Tatarinov, who "prophesied" under the influence of the "Holy Spirit." This person, whose quest for the "universal truth" underlying "all religion" especially appealed to Alexander's internationalist aims, was long in favor about the Court. He also became a student of religious works such as those of the author Stanévitch, whose "Discourses at the Tomb of a New-Born Infant respecting the Immortality of the Soul" had a curious vogue in all Russia.

In addition to these companions the Tsar also cultivated the society of "sober" associates more suitable to his station. With a group of members of the minor aristocracy he interested himself in righting the wrongs of the terrible convict system; and he appears to have continued during many months a correspondence regarding religious matters with the famous Quakers Allan and Grillet, whom he had met

MADAME DE KRÜDENER

during his journey to England in 1814. He had then declared himself much impressed with their pacifist theories. At about the time he first made the acquaintance of Madame de Krüdener, he wrote to question these "Friends" with respect to the position women should occupy in the Christian Church. Their answer, that "In the Christian faith men and women are equal," may well have tended to influence him to take into his confidence the "Lettonian Sibyl."

III

OF all the circle of pious enthusiasts who hovered about the Tsar after his conversion in 1812, none have left a place in the history of his international projects with the exception of Madame de Krüdener. Her story has been told (with sympathetic appreciation) by Eynard (Geneva, 1837). Saint-Beuve made her the subject of two of his literary portraits. A curious collection of her letters is published in the Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhailovitch's monumental history of his kinsman Alexander the First.

Barbara Julia de Wietinghov was born in Riga in the year 1764. Her father, of German Baltic origin, was a Senator of the Empire. Unlike most of the neighboring nobility the family was tolerant of the Russian Orthodox beliefs, and "Julie" was brought up according to the Greek rite. When she was thirteen years old, the entire family moved to Paris, and three years later she was married to the Baron de

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Krüdener, a Russian diplomat nearly twenty years older than herself. She appears to have lent herself willingly to this sacrifice of youthful charms which even in the springtime of youth were never remarkable. She had "a fine figure," and "good features," but a "cloudy complexion," the result of some unrecorded complaint that required a constant tour of more or less fashionable bathing resorts. The secret of her romance probably lay in her determination to enjoy a "career." M. de Krüdener, moreover, appears to have "understood her." (He had already been twice married and twice divorced and possessed some qualifications for the rôle of an elderly husband.) A curious romance with a young secretary attached to the Baron's Legation soon gave him an opportunity to show his tact in this respect. Both of the romantic young people sought his "advice" in time to avert any irreparable catastrophe.

Two children, a son and a daughter, soon blessed the Krüdener household, and the Tsarevitch Paul was the godfather of the first-born. Her husband's diplomatic posts in Venice and Copenhagen did not, however, long satisfy the Baroness's almost morbid craving for excitement. When the French Revolution was at its height she abandoned her husband to hasten to this "focus of the world's affairs." Her first avowed lover was another elderly gallant, the painter-philosopher Suard, who in spite of his fifty-five years fascinated her through the "charm of his

MADAME DE KRÜDENER

intellect." His marriage closed this chapter of the Baroness's education. In order to avoid playing the rôle of an abandoned mistress, she gave up her hard-won "position" in Paris and returned to her husband's Legation at Copenhagen. She was, however, not inconsolable. On her journey a new admirer, the young Chevalier de Frégeville, accompanied her and was installed — not without scandal — as part of her husband's strange household.

The death of her father in Riga, soon after the prodigal's return, caused her to go back to her native land, where she found herself the heiress to a considerable fortune. She now set about to obtain an offer of the Russian Embassy at Berlin for Baron de Krüdener. Through correspondence with influential friends — and the arts of Russian Court intrigue — she succeeded. In many ways this outcome was the fulfillment of all that then represented her highest ambitions. Her position in the Diplomatic Corps of the German capital was one of undivided leadership. About her liberal table at the Embassy gathered the most brilliant society of the day. Her circle of intimates included a group of *émigrés*, ex-courtiers of the brilliant Court of Louis XVI. In the company of gallants such as Rivarolles, Tilly, and Boufflers, the center of all the gayeties in which these splendid refugees sought to while away the tedium of their "temporary exile," Madame de Krüdener for the first time in her restless life entered the charmed circle

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

on whose fringe she had long waited. But it was characteristic of this unquiet spirit to abandon every secure triumph. Her old longing for "new sensations" soon drove her once more to seek the distractions of foreign travel.

During a visit to Switzerland, Madame de Krüdener fell under the influence of Madame de Staël, and a fresh ambition seized her. In imitation of her friend, she became an authoress. With the manuscript of her novel, "Valérie" (a none too prudish romance in the style of *Manon-Lescault*), she returned to Paris. Again she "mobilized" her resources of charm and beauty. Her literary wares soon found a publisher, and she became for a short time a "literary" success of the day. Napoleon, alone, refused to join in the chorus of praise, and her freely expressed disappointment at this failure to conquer the Master of France appears to have placed her under the fatal suspicion of belonging to the "opposition." She returned to Russia by way of Germany, where her activities were now to take a new and sudden turn, wholly at variance with her previous career.

Madame de Krüdener was to leave her mark in history — not as an authoress nor even as a brilliant diplomatic hostess. At the age of forty (1804) occurred her sudden conversion to the doctrines of "mysticism," then prevalent throughout Germany. Her biographers have ascribed this miracle to "a pious cobbler of Riga." She now began to devote her

MADAME DE KRÜDENER

whole time to developing the "system" of religious teachings with which her name is generally associated. Long hours of prayer and fasting took the place of her former dissipations and amusements. Having perfected herself in good works, her interrupted travels (1807) were resumed — no longer with the idea of distracting a frivolous mind, but with the stern intention of "preaching the Word." From Dresden she made expeditions to various Moravian centers in Saxony, Kleinwerk, Betheldorf, and Herrnhut.

To the simple German peasantry she endeared herself by the sweet cordiality of her manner. She professed to derive "much spiritual benefit from the unrestrained intercourse with these little communities of ardent Christians." With them she felt happy and at peace; but "the moment she took her natural place in polite society, whether at Dresden or elsewhere, she was assailed once more by old temptations to vanity and worldliness." "She was torn in two by conflicting desires."

Worn out by this struggle of her dual nature, she went in 1808 to live in the household of the noted Jung-Stilling and became converted to this mystical philosopher's particular form of "Quietism." Like Swedenborg (of whose writings he had made a special study), Jung-Stilling believed that certain persons possessed the faculty of communicating directly with the spiritual world. As a natural corollary, he con-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

sidered himself possessed of this power. Like all the “mystics” of his day, he indulged in much literal interpretation of the prophetic books of the Bible. His positive announcements of a second advent of Christ and prophecies of the speedy commencement of the Millennium may well have helped his distinguished pupil to remain true to her new resolves.

While some of the associates who frequented the house of the seer were doubtless filled with the same enthusiasm for the “good and true” that guided the Baroness, others appear to have been actuated by a less respectable motive — notably their common chronic need for money. Among the latter her biographer classes a certain “Pastor” Fontaine and Mary Kumerin — a kind of mystical medium who “prophesied under his influence.” The fortune of Madame de Krüdener was soon reduced by the calls made upon her bounty by these spiritual companions.

Nevertheless, the fame of the Baroness for piety and good works became more widespread every day. She now felt she could once more return to “the world” without danger to her immortal soul. Queen Louise of Prussia, whose fading beauty and romantic misfortunes appealed to Madame de Krüdener’s ready sympathy, became for some time the subject of her ministrations. In Würtemberg, where she made many converts, she first conceived the unfortunate idea of mixing politics with religion — and her connection with the mysterious *Illuminati* was openly

MADAME DE KRÜDENER

rumored. Escorted to the frontier by the police, she found a new refuge in the Grand Duchy of Baden. Here she attempted to exercise her religious persuasions upon Queen Hortense, but without success.

In 1814 she first attracted the attention of a member of the Tsar's family. When the Tsarina Elizabeth paid a visit to her brother at Karlsruhe, the Baroness profited by the presence in her suite of the Countess Stourdza, another mystical enthusiast, to make herself known to that August Lady. Soon the ladies of the Russian Imperial family were obsessed by her advances and prophecies. In the veiled mysterious language of her letters — a jumble of religious and political allusions — she foretold the downfall of the Bourbons: "These lilies," she wrote — "a pure and fragile flower which broke a scepter of iron — have appeared but to disappear." Her prognostications — as she intended — were duly reported to the Tsar Alexander and aroused his curiosity.

IV

MADAME DE KRÜDENER was the author of a letter which Alexander received during the Congress of Vienna: "The Angel who marks with the protecting sign of blood the door posts of the elect passes by, but the worldlings recognize him not. . . . How can one dance and dress in rich clothing while thousands suffer, and hatred separates the human race?" This mysterious warning — arriving at a time when his

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

own mind was troubled with doubt and disappointment — greatly affected the Tsar. He expressed a desire to meet the author. "I have immense things to say to him," she had declared. "The Lord alone can prepare his heart to receive them."

Prince Golytzine — whose own mystical leanings inclined him to be partial to Madame de Krüdener's pretensions — has left in his memoirs the following account of the interview, during which the Emperor Alexander first came under the "influence" of the famous Baroness. This event occurred at Heilbronn, near Heidelberg, during his journey from Vienna to join the Russian armies following the alarming news of Napoleon's return from Elba:

A number of reasons caused the Emperor to decide to make Madame de Krüdener's acquaintance. On the one hand, the great interest he now took in all emotions of a religious character and his complete abandonment to the influences of the Divine Will. On the other hand must also be noted his desire to talk with a woman who seemed to speak the living word of God; a woman who had journeyed like an Apostle among the incredulous society of the European Courts; a woman preceded and accompanied by rumors of her works. Finally the idea that this person was a Russian, one of his own subjects, caused the Emperor ardently to desire to meet this extraordinary prophetess. . . . Just at this time the Emperor had received from Kochelev a famous book entitled "A Cloud upon the Sanctuary, or A Matter which Philosophers do not even dare to Consider," translated from the German of Lebzine. Alexander had read this work without understanding it. Invited by the

MADAME DE KRÜDENER

Emperor to comment upon its meaning, Madame de Krüdener was able to explain these difficult passages which had been beyond his understanding.

The extent of the influence exercised by Madame de Krüdener over the mind of the Tsar has undoubtedly been much exaggerated. Curiosity with respect to the occult and religious matters which now occupied his leisure moments probably played a large part in their strange relationship. But whether her religious teaching ever had any deep or lasting effect remains open to doubt.

After Waterloo, traveling as an honored guest of the Russian General Staff, Madame de Krüdener arrived in Paris on the 14th day of July, 1815. She occupied an apartment in the Hôtel Montchenu, in the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, readily accessible through a garden from the palace where Alexander himself was lodged. Her salons soon became the scene of an almost continual "prayer meeting." While Madame de Krüdener still assisted publicly at the elaborate services of the Greek rite, celebrated in the Tsar's chapel at the Élysée, the private reunions in her own home were modeled on the simple gathering of the early Christians. "The rich furnishings of her apartments — even the dials of the clocks — were hidden by covers of gray cloth." The Baroness herself affected a kind of monastic dress. These gatherings were reserved, however, principally for members of the highest society. Among her congre-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

gation were the Duchesses of Bourbon and Duras, and some literary personages like Chateaubriand and Benjamin Constant. The fascinating Madame de Récamier, another of her circle, was implored by the tactful Baroness to make herself "as ugly as possible so as not to trouble souls."

Madame de Krüdener pretended to be guided in all her revelations by a mysterious mentor whom she called "The Voice." The errors of her youth, she explained, had forever shut her off from the sight of this author of her unearthly wisdom. Nor did she, except on rare occasions, attempt to personify her oracle. Yet her more devoted friends did not hesitate to claim for her direct communication with the heavenly powers. "The Voice," they believed, was the inspiration of the Saviour of Mankind.

Madame de Krüdener's claims, however, were far from being universally admitted by Parisian society. Madame de Récamier, herself the inspiring priestess of the cult of "Platonic love," confessed that she "was not convinced." Less charitable critics pretended that "The Voice" spoke in the tones of the astute M. de Talleyrand, who took this means of restoring confidence which events of the Congress of Vienna had undermined.

Yet, her influence with the Tsar was for a time believed to be all-powerful. On one occasion she kept him kneeling for more than eight hours on the marble floor of her oratory. "She had invented for him a new

MADAME DE KRÜDENER

form of flattery," writes a contemporary. "He had grown weary of the incense which represented him as the greatest potentate upon earth, the Agamemnon among kings. She therefore did not speak to him of his earthly powers, but of the mysterious power of his prayers." ¹

To the mystical idealism which she knew to be the foundation of his new "internationalist" beliefs, she cleverly made her chief appeal. She did not fail to hint at the vast power for good that his earthly greatness, supported by her prayers, might exercise upon the world. Her aim, in common with the published doctrines of the mysterious *Illuminati*, was to unite the churches and through them the nations of the world. This was a matter that he may readily have considered a part of his sublime programme of World Peace.

On August 30, 1815, the Baroness wrote triumphantly:

Alexander is, indeed, the elect of God; he walks in the path of renunciation. I now know every detail of his life. He comes to me regularly in order to fortify the spiritual bond he has formed with Heaven. If he is obliged to go into the world, it is neither to balls nor spectacles — matters which now depress his soul. He informs me he has taken a positive dislike to all forms of amusements.

Unfortunately, the Tsar seems to have relied on his newfound friend for inspirations that he was un-

¹ Madame de Boigne.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

willing or unable to follow. Concerning this period, in the reports of his indispensable Secret Police, Fouché wrote: "The Emperor gives up a great part of his time to pleasures notably in company with the fair sex."

Mystified by the strange relationship between Madame de Krüdener and her Imperial disciple, contemporary writers have undoubtedly exaggerated both her power over the Tsar and her intentions concerning his policies. Extravagant stories were told as to the mystical ceremonies that attended their interviews and the advisers to whom he submitted his will. De Barante attributes to Metternich a widely current anecdote (which the latter, however, omits from his own picturesque "Memoirs"), to the effect that the Austrian statesman was once invited by Alexander to a dinner at the Baroness's where an empty chair was placed for a "heavenly visitor — none other than the Christ!"

V

THE language used by the "initiated" — in itself calculated to excite suspicion and ridicule — soon had an unfortunate effect on the Tsar's "international" plans. Madame de Krüdener's characteristic vocabulary — which unquestionably finds an echo in Alexander's letters and even in official documents of this period — gave rise to the rumor that she either wrote with her own hand, or inspired,

MADAME DE KRÜDENER

many of his political acts. This fact did not help to further his political negotiations. Alexander himself, however, never spoke of Madame de Krüdener as the authoress of the Holy Alliance. This important point is attested by Madame de Choiseul-Gouffier, who adds: "I do not know upon what foundations the authors of two histories of Alexander have been pleased to attribute to the curiously exalted imagination of Madame Krüdener the idea of the Holy Alliance." Madame de Choiseul preferred to give the credit for Alexander's manifesto to the teachings of M. Laharpe, his Swiss tutor, who first made him acquainted with the writings of l'Abbé de Saint-Pierre, and afterwards with the philosophical speculations of the earlier German idealist philosophers. The new bizarre religious aspect of Alexander's idealism, she attributed with less probability to the fashionable oracle of her day M. de Chateaubriand.

A reasonable source of inspiration for the Tsar's more practical theories is to be found in the influence of that strange radical thinker and reactionary political writer, Nicholas Bergasse. The latter's philosophy, while tinged with impractical mysticism and an antiquarian view of the prerogatives of royalty, was at least based on a wide study of politics.

Bergasse had espoused the cause of Madame de Krüdener against her critics, in much the same spirit that he had undertaken the defense of Beaumarchais in his troubles, and kept the "natural philosopher"

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Cagliostro from imprisonment. The latter's attempts to "concentrate" the "animal magnetism" of his circle of disciples in a bucket of water (at the same time that he concentrated their money in his own pockets) had been an unfortunate experience for Bergasse. But he was an incorrigible follower of the standard of Don Quixote. In the mystical salon of the rue Saint-Honoré he found the "strange adventure" that he sought all his life. In the Tsar he recognized from the first another "crusader." The two men appear to have been drawn together by the force of a personal attraction that was to last for many years.

In the "Memoirs" of Pasquier, Bergasse is directly named as the principal author of the Holy Alliance:

The Emperor, at this time, was under the influence of a woman, who had undertaken to direct her sovereign by appeals to his conscience and imagination. . . . She was in turn influenced by a certain Bergasse, well known in France for more than thirty years for his defense of the mummeries of Cagliostro and the eccentricities of "mesmerism." I believe that the first draft was entirely in M. Bergasse's handwriting.

Bergasse had played a somewhat prominent rôle under the first restoration — and was not without political ambition. He was then best known as the author of a mystical work entitled "The Law of Beings and Their Destiny," an able refutation of the principles of Rousseau and the Revolution. He appears to have furnished what was politically sound in

MADAME DE KRÜDENER

the doctrine set forth on the Plain of Vertus, while Madame de Krüdener contributed the mystical form in which these ideas were expressed; a figurative language which the chancelleries of Europe were to regard with almost comical dismay.

Metternich in his "Memoirs" also credits Bergasse with an important influence upon the Tsar, while Léopold de Gaillard even attempts to describe at some length the interview between Bergasse and Alexander at which the principal features of this extraordinary Peace League were elaborated:

It was in Paris during the month of July, 1815, Paris which had become nothing more than a camping-ground for the Allies of Europe, that the neighbors of M. Bergasse became accustomed to the spectacle afforded by a carriage stopping near the lodge, from which three persons descended — a man of tall and imposing figure and accompanied by two ladies. Crossing what had formerly been one of the royal gardens, they entered his house — of modest appearance, formerly the gardener's lodge. . . . These mysterious personages were none other than the Tsar Alexander, Madame de Krüdener, and Madame de Lesay-Marnesia. Their host did not even leave his armchair on their arrival, remaining seated by formal order of his august guest. The authoress of "Valérie," seating herself in a chair and her companion on a bed, the Tsar placed himself upon a footstool between the Sibyl and Bergasse. It was, then, before this inner group of her most intimate disciples that Madame de Krüdener permitted herself to indulge in all the eloquence of "illumination." In the light of her prophetic vision the mists of the future faded away. The unity of the race of man, heretofore divided by so many

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

questions of nationality and relationship, was once more accomplished through a Holy Alliance of Kings. . . . From his Palace of the Kremlin, reigning over a pacified Asia and Europe, the Autocrat of Russia became a Royal Pontiff sending forth his blessing of peace. The Tsar listened fascinated by this discourse, and from time to time glanced at Bergasse who smiled indulgently . . . and tried to bring back these brilliant prophecies to some system of practical politics. Several of these meetings were required to enable Madame de Krüdener to expose her system before the sovereign who was to apply them, and the old philosopher whose criticism they both desired.

VI

FOLLOWING the second restoration of the Bourbons, the Tsar's "religiosity" had at least one tangible result. He became the champion of the French people against the depredations of his own allies. The Germans, smarting under the humiliations of the long Napoleonic occupation, would have blown up the Pont de Jéna, and torn down the column in the Place Vendôme built from captured German cannon. The Spaniards, recalling the wanton destruction of the citadel of Granada by Soult, threatened a devastating occupation of the Roussillon. Even the legitimate King, "Louis the Inevitable," had returned to Paris filled with ideas of avenging himself for his inglorious return to exile by a complete restoration of the privileges and rights of the Old Régime. It was only Alexander's presence that had prevented a hostile demonstration when he first arrived in Paris.

MADAME DE KRÜDENER

But for Napoleon's return from Elba, the Allies had blamed the Tsar's ill-considered generosity in not exiling him to the ends of the earth. The whole adventure of "the Hundred Days" was laid to his account. After Waterloo, as Alexander recognized, his prestige was considerably diminished. While the fate of Europe was being decided on the fields of Flanders, he had delayed at Heidelberg listening to the religious admonitions of his new oracle. Madame de Krüdener's apocalyptic prophecies had been fulfilled in the somewhat conspicuous absence of the "White Angel" who was to overthrow the "Beast." Alexander comforted himself with the thought of a new destiny: "The Saviour of Mankind is on my side," he announced to his Pythoness. "I am a great sinner, but he will make use of me to bring back Peace to his people." But the end of this "spiritual friendship" was near. It was not alone his military reputation that had suffered. The "prayer meetings" of the rue Montchenu had undermined the confidence of the very unimaginative statesmen who directed European affairs in Alexander's good judgment. Even among his own *entourage* there were many who tapped their foreheads with a significant gesture. In the language of the present day the Tsar was believed to have suffered a "breakdown." His splendid physique had not been able to withstand the long-drawn struggle with Napoleon. His face, haggard and weary from the fasts and penitences im-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

posed upon him by his "spiritual guide," doubtless lent probability to these rumors.

Alexander soon tired of the Baroness's extravagances — and probably of the notoriety which this relationship had caused. According to the worthy Pastor Empaytaz, one of the religious "advisers" who accompanied her to Paris, he even sought to moderate her zeal:

Madame de Krüdener in the latter part of her religious career had the misfortune to give way to the extravagances of an ardent imagination . . . and attached herself to the system of the Mystics. I know the Emperor was faithful in warning her of the danger in which she was, and that, so far from allowing himself to be drawn aside by a person who had done him so much good, he constantly opposed her by the Word of God.

In short, the influence of the "Lettonian Sibyl" was as brief as it was powerful. When, after imposing the pact of the Holy Alliance on his allies, the Tsar left Paris for St. Petersburg during the last days of September, Madame de Krüdener found her salons shunned by the notabilities who in the days of her vogue had crowded to hear her exhortations. The "inspiration" they had felt when kneeling side by side with the greatest sovereign of Europe had lost its potent charm. Her creditors also began to become insistent, and only the intervention of a group of youthful friends saved her from the ignominy of a debtor's prison. It soon became evident that the realization

MADAME DE KRÜDENER

of her highest dreams was to be but a prelude to her own eclipse.

She attempted to take up her "ministry" in Switzerland, but her mysterious relationship with Alexander, and the "liberalism" — more and more pronounced — of her teachings, drove her from exile to exile, through all the states of middle Europe. She attempted to return to Russia, but after several efforts to renew her relationship with the Tsar (now occupied with the even more "curious" revelations of Madame Bouche, a less complicated clairvoyant without political or diplomatic ambitions), she found herself in an "enforced residence" at Riga. Only on one occasion did her former patron consent to receive her. She found him still strangely receptive.

But the patronage of Prince Golytzine (who was soon to share with her the disapproval of the Russian Secret Police) did not avail to restore her even to a shadow of her former favor. One "privilege" was not denied, that of a prolonged one-sided correspondence with the Tsar. This resulted in several great folios of letters preserved in the archives of the Romanovs, many of them unopened, in their original envelopes, until a recent day. But no answers to her impassioned admonitions were ever directly made.

She was not long to survive the disillusion. In 1824, while living the life of a semi-exile in the Crimea, she died and was buried in that distant corner of the Tsar's Empire. Rumor rather than

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

history recounts that, on his final journey in search of health, the Tsar paused for a moment to pray at her tomb. But a few weeks later, "Alexander, the Well-Intentioned," followed the footsteps of the errant Baroness on the last Great Adventure of all.

VI

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS: THE DIPLOMACY OF ISOLATION

CONTRARY to a cherished popular tradition, the group of diplomatists who laid the foundations of American foreign policy had little in common with the improvised envoys of a later day. The versatile "pioneer," laying aside his axe and rifle to measure his wits with the "effete" statesmen of Europe, is a creature of patriotic fancy. Franklin, perhaps the greatest of our foreign representatives, had undergone a long and arduous training in foreign relations as the Commissioner of the Colonies in London. Jay, Foreign Secretary under the Confederation, was (like Gallatin) a bi-lingual product of a Franco-American ancestry and education. Jefferson and Monroe, before they were called upon to direct the Foreign Department of the Government, had each served a difficult apprenticeship as Minister to France. At the age of eleven, John Quincy Adams was acting as the secretary of his father, when that strangely tactless representative of a weak and barely recognized Power was sent to France. Such an experience was a training that falls to the lot of but few *diplomats de carrière*.

John Quincy Adams probably owed his principal

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

success to this routine knowledge of diplomatic *protocol*, of the foibles and weaknesses of foreign Courts. He certainly owed little to inherited temperament. The cantankerous, unsympathetic, irreconcilable disposition of the most unpopular — if the most respected — family in New England was an unpromising equipment for the task of international conciliation. The latter quality had not, indeed, become the conspicuous aim of diplomacy. National advantage, rather than a widespread harmony, was still the end with which foreign relations were frankly pursued on both sides of the Atlantic. In these latter days of a somewhat hazy idealism, this typical product of the “glacial drift” of New England coast provinces might have found himself hampered in carrying out his programme of our world contacts. Yet, at the most critical period of our diplomatic history — when the “guiding tradition” that still obtains to a remarkable degree in our conduct of external affairs was in process of formation — Adams embodied the attitude favored by the majority of his fellow countrymen. What Dr. Fiske has called the “one genuine political force of the Era of Good Feelings” was “the spirit of reaction *versus* European ideas.”

The historical material for a life of John Quincy Adams is so abundant, the imprint of the man's personality on the foreign policy of his country is so deep and enduring, that even the congenital biographical gift of a large family connection has failed to exhaust



JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

the subject. His monumental "Diary" is a major source of American diplomatic history. Yet even the gloss of Adams on Adams, and the laboriously conscientious self-revelations of his autobiography fail somehow to explain his outstanding success in his chosen field of diplomacy.

The Adams "manner," handed down through three generations of diplomats, was generally opposed to all the accepted traditions of their calling. Of the amenities of international intercourse they were generally scornful — if not temperamentally incapable. Of their country's popularity abroad they often appear as careless as of the personal impression they might make upon the statesmen and courtiers with whom their duties brought them in contact. Yet the process of formulating a real American policy was perhaps better forwarded by this bleakness of method. Temporizing with persons and policies irreconcilably at variance with the fundamentals of Americanism could only lead to cross-purpose and misunderstanding. Yet the outgrowth of such a technique — especially in the case of a Power not yet numbered among the Great — was necessarily a degree of isolation. What may be called the Adams Policy — clear-seeing, not without practical idealism — satisfied, and still satisfies, the majority of his fellow countrymen. It also explains why, in spite of conscientious efforts and popular illusion, America is not more generally beloved among the nations of the earth.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

The genealogy and habitat of the Adams family have been too often described to call for repetition. Henry Adams, who in the sixteenth century "fled from the Dragon Persecution in Devonshire" and "alighted with his eight sons near Mount Wollaston," is the prototype. He chose to settle in the stoniest portion of New England — and prospered there. To perpetuate the principles of a sturdy and dogmatic Puritanism, thus imported, became the end and object of this dour race. John and Samuel, of Revolutionary fame, were the first to illustrate the name. When John Adams married Abigail Smith, the daughter of a Unitarian preacher of some repute, he was but following the trend of his destiny. The mother of John Quincy Adams deserves more than a passing word in the biographies of her distinguished husband and son.

Abigail Adams has been well pictured by one of the numerous Adams Sagas. Her "Letters" show her to have been a woman of diligent reading, primed with all the "promptitude of classical allusion" that passed for "culture" in her day. She wrote, even to her husband, under the pseudonyms of "Diana" and "Portia." Until foreign travel noticeably broadened her views, she must have cherished the illusion of writing "in the style of Mr. Addison" — without his lamentable frivolity and lightness. The admonitions which she addressed to her son were those of an eminently Christian "Spartan Matron." Even the

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

letters of his austere father seem almost human by comparison with this once-admired correspondence. To her influence he doubtless owed the unassailable rectitude of his entire public career — and a total lack of any quality approaching a sense of humor.

The political life of our Adams may be said to have begun one sunny March morning on the summit of Penn's Hill, near Braintree, when clinging to the skirts of Abigail his mother their ears were "assaulted by a mighty roar of cannon." Concerning this "fierce civil strife," she wrote to her John (busy with his duties at the Continental Congress) begging him, in view of the circumstances, to excuse "this most incorrect letter." A few days later she prematurely complains that "for all the muster and stir I had hoped for more important and decisive scenes." But Bunker Hill was fraught with greater consequences than she dreamed — both to her country and to her clan. In the following September she scourged her reluctant patriot neighbors for their lack of initiative against the King's regulars, recalling the fact — more or less pertinent — that "Cæsar's tenth legion was never forgiven." The postscript to this letter was doubtless the part most appreciated by her anxious husband. In it he was casually informed that "Master Johnny has become a post-rider between Boston and Braintree," and that his "Diana" was efficiently engaged in running the farm.

The younger Adams began his diplomatic career at

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

the age of eleven. He sailed with his father in February, 1778, on the frigate *Boston* for France, where the latter had been chosen for one of the earliest and least grateful of the "diplomatic" missions sent out by the Continental Congress. His position at the brilliant Court of Louis XVI was scarcely that of a diplomatist — certainly it had no "privileges." It is doubtful whether either Adams was even afforded an opportunity to view the countenance of their royal ally in a formal interview. The position of the obscure agent of a republican "experiment" — in spite of the personal success achieved by Franklin — must have been the reverse of edifying. Moreover, when scarcely established in Paris, John Adams was most inconsiderately ordered to report "in person" to the Congressional Committee of Foreign Correspondence, then to return in all haste in a leaky ship to his post. Little wonder that diplomatic honors were the last sought by the patriot founders of the Great Republic!

Besides aiding his father with the endless copying of documents, "Master Johnny" was sent to school, first in Paris, then at Leyden. It was probably the uncommon gift of foreign languages thus acquired that induced Francis Dana (prematurely accredited as "Envoy" to the Court of Russia) to offer him the post of private secretary. But the coldness which met this earlier attempt to enter into relations with a Tsarist Court was made too evident even for the thick-skinned diplomacy of our earliest Minister.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

Dana returned, crestfallen, from Great Catherine's capital. The younger Adams was thus enabled to add to his already unusual diplomatic experiences an intimate (if obscure) connection with the negotiations for the Treaty of Paris. These were carried on by Franklin, Jay, and his father, and ended in the brilliantly successful Treaty of 1783 with the mother country.

In an earlier diary he wrote:

There is a character of romantic wildness about the memory of my travels in Europe from 1778 to 1785 which gives to it a tinge as if it was the recollection of something in another world. Life was new, everything was surprising, everything carried with it a deep interest.

In his most impressionable years the grave, precocious young New-Englander had been thrown on terms of intimacy with Franklin and Jefferson. He had been presented to some of the great figures of his time, and viewed the splendid Courts of the principal European Powers. No other American statesman of his generation could match this training for a career in foreign affairs. Throughout his career, jealousy and petty spite thought to diminish his fame in every other department of government, yet criticism was rarely extended to his action in dealing with other Powers. In this field of public duty he was admittedly qualified by experience beyond all his competitors.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

II

IN 1794, President Washington appointed young Mr. Adams to the Ministry at The Hague. The preceding decade had again been filled with new experiences — and not a few disillusiones. But they were of a far more usual type than the events of his early years of diplomacy. He had returned nine years before on his own initiative to follow a course at Harvard rather than remain as secretary in his father's new London Legation. Residence abroad during an impressionable youth is not conducive to popularity in an American university. There is no reason to suppose that young John Quincy's famous manner gained him many friends without some efforts of his own. Yet at Harvard he seems to have been popular — sometimes almost convivial. But his career as a lawyer, first at Newport, then at Boston, was manifestly unsuccessful in spite of his powerful connections.

The enforced leisure that accompanied his practice of the law at least gave him ample opportunity to try his hand at the fashionable art of pamphleteering. Under significant titles, "Publicola," "Marcellus," and "Barneveld," his support of the Federalist Administration (notably in the *Genêt imbroglio*) attracted the attention of the Father of his Country. It was high time to rescue the good opinion he not unnaturally maintained regarding his own capabilities.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

"I still find myself as obscure, as unknown to the world, as the most indolent or the most stupid of human beings," he confides to an unfailingly sympathetic diary. Twenty-seven was an early age for a Minister Resident even in the days of Pitt. But Washington rarely blundered in his choice of men — and Adams's qualifications were unusual. In 1794, two events consolidated his future success. He was promoted to the Mission at Berlin and married Miss Louisa Johnson, "charming like a Romney portrait," the daughter of the American Consul in London. Although Abigail objected with characteristic vehemence that Miss Johnson was "too English" to mate with a New-Englander, the match, notably from a diplomatic point of view, was in every way appropriate. In a career wherein official success bore too pathetically often the taste of Dead Sea Fruit, a happy married life and the joys of family became for Adams the Abundant Reward.

In 1801, young Adams was recalled from Berlin by his father the President. The latter could scarcely allow Jefferson the satisfaction of driving one of his family from office. The sequel was strangely characteristic. Elected to the Senate by the Federal interest in Massachusetts, the son of John Adams was soon found supporting his father's bitterest enemy on a question of principle. The Republican programme of half measures, the ruinous Non-Importation and Embargo Acts, had no appeal for a man who had

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

proposed that the Executive should be empowered to "insist" upon the rights of neutrals "to trade unmolested in time of war." But with rumored sedition rampant among the Federalist members of Congress, and defiance at Hartford, in the face of Great Britain's "provocations," Adams was not a man to let himself be held back from a conception of plain duty by the force of party ties.

It was one thing, however, to brave the storm of abuse that his father's old supporters poured upon his head, and another to accept favors at the hands of the Adamses' enemy. Jefferson, in 1805, would have rewarded him with another foreign mission. His support of the Administration had lost him (besides such popularity vouchsafed the Adamses in their native State) his seat in the Senate. But — although his training in foreign affairs would have been invaluable to his country at the juncture — he refused. It was not until the advent of Madison's Administration that Adams could conscientiously accept the post of Minister to Russia. Nor could his boyhood recollections of the days when he had acted as secretary of Dana's short-lived Mission have left him many illusions regarding the amenities of the St. Petersburg Mission.

Concerning the long and tedious journey from Boston Harbor to the Neva, of Mr. Adams's readings and reflections, we read with all the *minutiæ* that enforced leisure permitted, in the second volume of his famous

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

"Memoirs." An exalted inner life, a passion for progressive mental improvement and abstract speculation, is what this daily record chiefly reveals. The keynote of this strange character was an insatiable curiosity concerning every branch of knowledge — even the most alien to his purposes. One is led to conjecture that his impatience toward the less gifted mortals with whom he came in contact was occasionally the result of recurrent fits of mental indigestion. He sometimes appears even to have judged his diplomatic triumphs as wholly subordinate to this process of intensive auto-cultivation. The Adams fashion for self-education, prolonged through life (which has resulted in one of the most charming books of our own generation), was an inherited passion.

There is a touch of actuality in Adams's picture of the American Minister installed in the Russian capital in an improvised household, surrounded by depredating servants. There was but one certainty in life: the punctual bills of the "greensmen, poulterers, fishmongers . . . besides purveyors of tea, coffee, sugar, wax and tallow candles." The Adams temper was permanently depleted — not to mention the Adams pocketbook. In the midst of these trials, minutely recorded, we catch vague glimpses of a background filled with stirring events and a characteristic portrait of the Tsar-Idealist. A mutual taste for walking along the quays of the Neva was his principal contact with Alexander. They discussed "as

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

usual about the weather," and of the beauty of Mary Gordon, Mrs. Adams's maid. (The Tsar, *en connoisseur*, asked if good looks were prevalent in America.) They even compared their respective hygienic systems for combating the rigors of the northern winter: "'You are not of my opinion,' the Autocrat inquired 'about flannel?' I said that I had been so long in the custom of wearing it in winter that I believed that if I should leave it off I should die under the operation. 'But,' said he, 'there are now many physicians who believe that flannel is a bad thing for wear.'" He also remarked with envious approval that the Tsar's bedroom windows were left open "even in the coldest weather."

The "Memoirs" are a curious study in relative values, and the reactions of a well-trained mind to the "appeal of trifling things." While Mr. Adams read Chateaubriand and the Koran, and reflected upon Mr. Watts's "Improvement of the Mind," the approaching storm of the Napoleonic invasion was about to burst upon Russia. There are few records by Mr. Adams to mark its progress. On March 19, 1812, he writes: "Walked upon the Quay and met the Emperor. 'At all events,' said he, 'we shall not begin the war; my will is yet to prevent it, but we expect to be attacked.' 'Then,' said I, 'as Your Majesty has determined not to commence, I would fain hope it will pass over without war.' 'I wish it may,' said he, '*mais il avance toujours*.' I said, 'I hope he will stop

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

somewhere.'” The final retort betrays some human interest in the great drama before his eyes. But the next line is Abigail's own son at his worst: “Paucton and the *Météorologie primitive* still engross all my leisure.”

The famous “Memoirs” occasionally throw a strange light on the diplomatic usages of the day. On September 2d he was summoned to call on the famous Madame de Staël, who wished to discuss with him the best manner by which “she might continue to receive her interest in England while there is war between the United States and Great Britain.” This masterful lady, it appeared, owned land and stocks in America and could see no logical objection to calling the American Minister and the British Envoy into friendly consultation regarding her dilemma. A few days later Lord Cathcart called on Mr. Adams and the acquaintance thus strangely begun was continued throughout the war. Indeed, in view of the difficulty of obtaining news in the Russian capital, our representative appears to have depended largely upon this enemy source for information concerning the progress of the struggle.

The Russian Chancellor, Count Roumianzov, soon informed Mr. Adams of the Tsar's desire to undertake a mediation between his British allies and the United States. His motives were frankly stated: “That having made peace and reëstablished the relations of commerce and amity with England, the

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Emperor was much concerned and disappointed to find the whole benefit which he expected his subjects would enjoy commercially from that event defeated and lost from the new war." The Chancellor also declared "there were various indications that there was on both sides a reluctance at engaging and prosecuting this war." Thus began the famous negotiation which was to engross Adams for many months, and in the end to bring him both credit and criticism. However, the Emperor, more than ever "engaged in the cause of Europe," had little time to busy himself with the duties he had assumed. Adams viewed the arrival of two Commissioners (Messrs. Gallatin and Bayard), sent by the American Congress to treat of the matter in St. Petersburg, with not unmixed approval. Their position was rendered difficult by the refusal of the British Government to join in the negotiation, and the American Minister was continually troubled by their "diplomatic" pretensions. In August the matter was complicated by Napoleon's suggestion that the United States should be represented at the Congress of Frankfort, which would thus become a meeting to consider a general World Peace. Adams "had information by private letter that England, in accepting the proposal of the Congress at Prague, had expressly excepted the American question." The Tsar-Internationalist was doubtless receptive, but Roumianzov had no more faith in Congresses than had Adams. The matter, however, is not

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

without interest as the earliest suggestion of associating the United States with the European System — a subject which was to give the American Minister cause for much consideration at a later day.

III

It was not until the final downfall of Napoleon that Great Britain at last consented to treat with the Commissioners sent by the United States. Together with Messrs. Clay and Russell, Messrs. Gallatin, Bayard, and Adams were directed to proceed to Ghent. Hostilities now threatened to prolong themselves indefinitely in a struggle waged without prospect of a decision favorable to either party. Mr. Adams proceeded by way of Gothenburg, leaving his family behind him in Russia. Passing through The Hague he recalled that "here I made my entrance on the political theater as a public man." He adds a curious reflection: "At that time I commenced the diary that I have continued without interruption to the present day." Was ever man of action so obsessed by a literary destiny? It is, however, from the pages of this invaluable document that we have most to learn concerning the subsequent negotiations.

The meeting at Ghent did not take place without much discussion and heartburning. Of the pomp and circumstance that once surrounded such diplomatic gatherings there is little trace. The routine adopted by British and Americans recalls the informal gather-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

ings of our own time. The joint meetings of the two Commissions were held, for the first time in recorded history, in a hotel. After the formal sessions the scene of their quarrels was adjourned to the dining-table, where at the risk of indigestion the discussions continued.

Mr. Adams wisely escaped when possible from the latter trial:

I dined again at the *table d'hôte* at one. The other gentlemen dined at four. They sit after dinner and drink bad wine and smoke cigars, which neither suits my taste nor habits and absorbs time which I cannot spare. I find it impossible even with the most rigorous economy of time to do half the writing that I ought.

Young diplomats desiring to study the hidden technique of international negotiation should be referred for their instruction to Adams's intimate account of the negotiations that preceded the Treaty of Ghent. The quarrels, jealousies, and backbitings of the American Commissioners among themselves are described in infinite detail. They occupy, indeed, more space than the pages devoted to the formal discussion of the "Peace." The differences separating the Americans were often deeper than those that prevented their agreement with the British. When the struggle narrowed down to a question concerning, on the one hand, the right of British subjects to navigate the Mississippi and, on the other, the maintenance of the American rights to a share in the Canadian

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

fisheries, sectional jealousies rent asunder the *entente* which the tactful Mr. Gallatin had with difficulty negotiated between Clay and Adams. The Southern delegate did not mince his words: "The navigation principle," he maintained, "is much too important to concede for the mere liberty of drying fish on a desert." Mr. Adams, who like Tobias invariably appears in all these debates with a figurative cod in one hand, took the opposite ground. Moreover, as the diarist of the occasion he has the last word: "Mr. Clay lost his temper, as he invariably does when the question of the British right to navigate the Mississippi is discussed."

Adams was unlike Clay, however, in keeping in view the necessity of some accommodation (even at the expense of personal and national dignity) with an enemy who held the trump cards. It was an easy matter for the favorite orator of the House of Representatives to talk about "breaking off the negotiations" and "war for three years longer." But, as the other Commissioners clearly realized, the American victories at sea, while spectacular and cheering, could hardly offset British victories on land. Another factor, much commented on in Europe, was the expectation that the veteran armies of the Spanish Peninsular campaign would soon be available for service in America. This was a probable and none too welcome prospect. Freed from the Napoleonic menace, her allies of the Great Coalition believed that Great

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Britain would renew on a broader scale the contest that had cost her a colonial empire. In this state of affairs Adams was ready to make concessions that his instructions did not authorize. He said he "would now gladly take the state before war as the general basis of the peace." Responsibility for this "trespass" on their instructions he would courageously take upon himself. The outcome, more easily reached than at first appeared possible, cannot be understood without further reference to the general European situation. The sudden acceptance of the American position by the British delegates was the result of the direct intervention of the British Foreign Minister in the debates. On his way to the Congress of Vienna, Castlereagh had stopped at Ghent to urge some sort of conclusion that would enable him to meet with free hands the menace of Russian domination in the councils of Europe.

The "form of universal peace" that resulted on December 24, 1814, gave satisfaction to the claims of neither party, yet left the Americans in a strategic position. Mr. Clay had stood out to the end for the abandonment of impressment, and drew political capital from a "firmness" that deceived no one at the time. The matter of the fisheries and the Mississippi was tacitly dropped, but a firm protest was recorded. The battle of New Orleans happily intervened and Niles's "Weekly Register" was able to talk of a "peace signed in the arms of Victory." Any criticism of the

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

American Commissioners was hushed when it was learned that the Duke of Wellington had spoken in Parliament of the "astonishing superiority" shown by the American diplomats over their opponents. Thus Mr. Adams, on his promotion to London as Minister, was able to enjoy the prestige of a generally allowed, if somewhat mysterious, success. His subsequent negotiation of the agreement limiting the armament of the two Powers on the Great Lakes but confirmed this judgment on his capabilities.

Adams's experience as Minister at the Court of St. James's was chiefly valuable as a preparation for the intricate questions he was soon to be called upon to solve as Secretary of State. His dislike of "tablecloth oratory" limited his usefulness. Readiness to "dine for his country" has always been part of the equipment of every successful American Envoy to Great Britain, and Mr. Adams was physically and mentally dyspeptic. He made, however, some valuable official and personal contacts. Castlereagh and Canning were not merely names inscribed at the bottom of the formal communications that reached him at the State Department. Both men he knew as individuals. The former he found "sufficiently graceful and his person handsome. His manner was cold, but not absolutely repulsive." Canning's more definite overtures of friendship were politely reciprocated. Among the members of the Diplomatic Corps, especially his colleagues representing the other "Minor

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Powers," he found much curiosity expressed concerning the attitude of the United States toward the "New International Order" of the Continent, and especially the President's disposition regarding the Tsar's much-discussed "Holy League" of "Justice, Christian Charity, and Peace." Adams observed from the beginning a great jealousy of the "dictatorial pretensions" of the principal Powers of the old Coalition. When in June, 1817, he sailed for the last time from Europe, the stage was set for the long diplomatic struggle that was to confront him as the principal member of Mr. Monroe's Administration.

IV

Just one hundred years ago the young philosopher Emerson wrote concerning the States of Europe in his Concord diaries — the Sibylline Books of our earlier Republican philosophy: ¹

Aloof from the contagion during the long progress of their decline, America hath ample interval to lay deep and solid foundations for the greatness of the New World. . . . Let the young American withdraw his eyes from all but his own country and try to find employment there. . . . In this age the despots of Europe are engaged in the common cause of tightening the bonds of monarchy about the thriving liberties and the laws of men; and the unprivileged orders, the bulk of human society, gasping for breath beneath their chains — and darting impatient glances toward the free institutions of

¹ *Journal*, 1820-1824.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

other countries. To America, therefore, the rulers look with apprehension, the people with hope.

The Great Decision which Monroe and Adams were called upon to make with respect to American participation in the affairs of Europe during the period from 1817 to 1823 forms an important preface to the problems of the present time. Then as now the liberal opinion of Europe was urging upon the statesmen and diplomats the importance of discovering some golden formula for the "enforcement by common action of international obligations." As in our own day, they accompanied this demand with warnings and reservations respecting the sacredness of the "sovereign rights" of states and the newer "right of nationality." To reconcile this familiar contradiction under the monarchical form of government then prevalent (with its centralization of power and authority) was in some ways an easier task at Vienna than at Versailles. Then, as now, many reasons insistently urged upon the American Republic a "moral participation" at least in trans-Atlantic affairs. Moreover, the invitation extended to the United States to share in the councils of Europe was no less insistent than at the present day.

During the period of reconstruction which preceded the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, the Tsar-Idealist was convinced that, in order to obtain the "universality" he desired for his system, the "Holy

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

League" must include not only the Christian Powers of the Continent, but also Great Britain and the United States. His efforts to persuade the two Anglo-Saxon nations to adhere to his pact of "Justice, Christian Charity, and Peace" form an interesting chapter in the development of internationalism. It became evident that, in spite of the duties laid upon her respecting revolutionary France by the Treaty of Chaumont, England was determined to return as quickly as possible to her policy of independent action. Castlereagh and Canning were both determined that Great Britain must "resume her isolation." The problem confronting Adams was a similar one: whether to ally the United States to a general system of World Confederation, or whether to continue at the head of a separate American System.

The policy debated by Monroe's Cabinet, and the conclusions arrived at, have directed the course of American foreign affairs for nearly a century. When the repeated appeals of the Tsar's Envoys failed to obtain the desired results, Alexander's sensitive pride caused him to bury in the limbo of his secret official *dossiers* all traces of these negotiations. But in the archives of the Russian Foreign Office, proofs are not lacking of the long and patient efforts made between the years 1816 and 1819 to induce the great American Republic to abandon her policy respecting European entanglements, and to play a part in a new "international" system.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

The military ends of the Grand Alliance to curb the World-Imperialism of the ruler of France had just been crowned with success. At a time when the fear of Napoleon had accustomed the Powers of Europe to common measures of political and military action, the United States found herself estranged from the victors by reasons arising from the great war itself. The neutrality of the principal American state had been maintained with the greatest difficulty. In 1810, Napoleonic diplomacy had successfully committed the United States to a course favorable to the French view of the doubly declared "blockade," which was ruining her commerce. Although in practice the Emperor had relaxed none of the severity of the Rambouillet Decrees under which American shipmasters groaned, the wrongs of the "quasi-war" with France were forgotten in an open breach between the United States and Great Britain. During the War of 1812 the ports of Havre and Brest became the home stations whence American privateers sailed forth to prey upon British merchantmen. When, two years later, the treaties of Kalisch, Toeplitz, and Chaumont had gathered the Powers of Europe in progressively strengthening bonds of international solidarity, the young American Republic found herself internationally isolated — bound by an unsatisfactory *modus vivendi* to the tottering Napoleonic Colossus, and at war with one of the principal members of the Coalition.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

The Tsar's proposed "Holy Alliance of Peace" had been formally made public through the imperial *ukase* of January 1, 1816. Although its obscure intentions caused a stir all over Europe, several months elapsed before the matter was even noticed in the American newspapers. On August 26, 1816, the "New York Evening Post" announced that "the King of the Netherlands has acceded to the Holy League, considering that it will have a beneficial effect on the state of society and the reciprocal relations between nations." On September 4th of the same year a meeting of the sovereigns of the Holy Alliance is reported by the same paper "as likely to take place at Carlsbad." To this notice was added the following comment — certainly far from hostile in tone: "No doubt matters of great importance will be discussed at this assembly, and if discussions run upon the means of consolidating the peace of the world . . . and removing the burden of taxes and unwieldy military establishments which press at this moment upon every country, the members of the Holy League will establish an imperishable claim on the gratitude of mankind."

In Niles's "Register," a gazette published in Baltimore, may be found (April 6, 1816) even more definite expression of the generous approval which public opinion in America seems always ready to accord to schemes promising an increment of international solidarity and good-will. The Massachusetts

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

Peace Society, writing to the Emperor Alexander under date of April 9th, "recalls to the attention of His Imperial Majesty that the Society was founded in the very week in which the Holy League of the three sovereigns was announced in Russia," and has as its object "*to disseminate the very principles avowed in the wonderful Alliance.*" In the same issue appears an announcement that the American Minister at St. Petersburg "is treated with great distinction. It is thought important negotiations are in progress."

The not unfavorable impression which the Tsar's project made in American diplomatic circles is shown in the correspondence of Levett Harris, the American Chargé d'Affaires at the Court of St. Petersburg:

The Treaty of triple alliance concluded at Paris will, before this comes to hand, be already known to you. . . . This treaty, which originated with the Emperor Alexander, and *which does equal honor to his head and heart*, I fear will not answer the *magnanimous* purposes for which it was designed. If such were the case we should behold Europe ready to embrace the arts of peace, and see dissolving at once those monstrous combinations which have already lifted the world from its axis and now threaten to consummate the work of human woe.

Levett Harris, in spite of many faults, may be counted one of the body of trained and experienced diplomats who founded on a solid basis of good sense and good-will the early foreign relations of the United States. He was too well aware of the deep rivalry separating the Allied Powers to believe in the cement-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

ing power of fine phrases; but he nevertheless seems to share the hopes entertained by a large number of his countrymen that Alexander's League might result in some permanent guarantee of European tranquillity. Harris did not fail, moreover, to note in his dispatches the commonly credited rumors that the six hundred thousand Russian troops still under arms "proved that the Tsar was meditating offensives in the Danubian provinces, if not elsewhere."

The task of maintaining the friendly relations which already existed between Russia and the United States and of obtaining their accession to the League was actively pursued by Alexander during the summer of 1816. On August 5, 1816, Mr. Levett Harris further reported to Secretary Monroe the following interesting conversation held the day before with one of the Tsar's principal advisers:

The Count Capo d'Istria, who engaged me at this interview in a conversation of an hour and a half's length, closed it by acquainting me that he had been preparing a communication to me relative to the Tripartite Treaty of the Sovereigns of Russia, Austria, and Prussia (the treaty called the "Holy Treaty"), with a view to know the sentiments of the American Government on the subject. That if the United States chose to yield their assent to this treaty, the Emperor would receive it with deference. That notwithstanding many opinions had gone abroad, on the subject of this League, it was none the less a solemn compact formed to preserve the peace of Europe, and that whilst Russia continued to hold her present power this peace would not be troubled. I ob-

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

served that it was notorious that peace had been a leading feature of our policy, and that we had reason to hope that we should not again be soon forced to depart from this policy. As Mr. Pinckney, I trusted, would soon feel himself justified to repair here, I begged that any communication of the nature now suggested might be reserved for the period of his arrival.

From his correspondence with Dashkov, the Russian Envoy to the United States (1817), the Tsar appears to have had every reason to suppose that his overtures were meeting with a friendly reception in Washington. "It is assured," wrote Dashkov to Lieven, the Russian Ambassador in London, on one occasion, "that the American Government intends asking to be associated with the Holy League."¹

Dashkov, a diplomat of mediocre intelligence, was perhaps unduly impressed by the expressions of approval with which American idealists welcomed his master's policy. A pact which in its actual form merely obligated its signers to render each other vague "reciprocal service" and to coöperate "in accordance with the direction of the Holy Scriptures" for the attainment of the better practice of "religion, peace, and justice," would naturally appeal to the generous sentimentality so often controlling public opinion in the United States with respect to foreign affairs. The absurdity of being treated as "brothers"

¹ MS. Archives, Russian Foreign Office, St. Petersburg, Carton 7, *United States*, February 22 — March 6, 1817. (Unpublished.)

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

by the three most reactionary sovereigns of Europe would probably have deterred but few among the kindly beings who formed the Massachusetts Peace Society from expressing their sympathy for the Tsar's "League of Peace." The vague and impracticable language in which this manifesto was couched might appear ominous to more statesmanlike critics, but uninformed public sentiment could hardly foresee the true meaning and significance of the pact, or that the future policy of the Holy Alliance, as applied under Alexander's later reactionary influence, was destined to become an unqualified support of "legitimist principles" abhorrent to American ideals.

The Tsar's efforts to secure America's coöperation were never so near success as just before Adams's return from England. His secret aims were, moreover, in line with a policy to which certain shades of public opinion in the United States are always responsive. The Holy Alliance had developed as its principal aim that of offsetting British influence in the councils of Europe. The strengthening of the Tsar's own position as the supreme arbiter of world affairs might result from further exploiting this prejudice in the United States. He neglected, however, one characteristic fact: Public opinion in the Republic during the "Era of Good Feelings" had little time to worry about foreign affairs.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

V

ADAMS arrived in Washington in September, 1817. From conversations with Benjamin Rush and the staff at the Department of State, he soon concluded "the path before me is beset with thorns," and "it becomes more doubtful than ever whether I shall be able to continue long in it." On the same day, Sunday, he prefaced the usual entry in his diary with a little exercise in original verse:

*"Extend, all-seeing God, thy hand,
In mercy still decree,
And make to bless my native land,
An instrument of me."*

There were eight more stanzas of psalmody, which in spite of their edifying sentiment leave no regrets that Adams's ambitions to abandon public life in favor of a literary career were never achieved.

His forebodings regarding his duties were soon fulfilled. There were differences with the "flighty" Hyde de Neuville, the French Minister, concerning rights which the restored Government claimed had been carelessly overlooked in the negotiations with Napoleon over Louisiana. (On one occasion Neuville's Gallic temperament so overcame him that he rushed from Mr. Adams's presence into the street leaving his hat and coat to be forwarded to his Legation.) An adventurer named Gaines had seized Amelia Island and set up a "tribunal" where the prizes

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

taken by American privateers, flying the strange flags of new South American republics, could be safely "condemned" under the jurisdiction of a "semi-independent" government. This led to a difference of opinion between Adams and Monroe. The President, embodying the "Era of Good Feelings," always "listened with candor" to the representations of his new Secretary of State, but not infrequently failed to agree with his conclusions. More disturbing still to a man of Adams's character, events often proved the President manifestly in the right.

The Chevalier (he was also Abbé) de Correa was pressing for a formal alliance between Portugal and the United States. After the great Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, this friend of former President Jefferson called Adams's attention to the sudden importance attached to American questions by the first reunion under the terms of the Treaty of Alliance.

Once the question of readmitting France to the councils of Europe had been decided, the debates of the "World-Parliament" of Aix-la-Chapelle may be resumed as a fruitless struggle carried on by the Tsar's representatives (later reënforced by the French representative, Richelieu) to secure from their reluctant colleagues of Prussia, Austria, and Great Britain some formal recognition of the principles of international action and solidarity. The Tsar desired a

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

“fraternal” reliance on the indefinite language of the Holy Alliance. Castlereagh’s reservations held England obstinately apart from any *Alliance solidaire*. Metternich’s grudging recognition of the advantages of such a pact were of little practical value.

Yet even a Platonic “mediation” (Alexander had proposed an “intervention”), which was the only international action that could be obtained from the Powers in the question of the Spanish colonies, was a matter of concern to the United States. None of the Continental Powers saw fit directly to oppose the Tsar’s dream of a great European Alliance, based on the principles set forth in his “Instructions” to Novosiltzov. There were many regrettable differences of opinion concerning what matters could properly be considered by this first Assembly of Europe under the terms of the Treaty of Alliance. The agenda contained subjects that are familiar to every similar conference of our own day: the treatment of the “minority” Jewish population in Eastern Europe; the advantages of establishing an international “Maritime Police.” But on one subject—and on one alone—was it possible to obtain unanimity of opinion. This concerned the outrageous conduct of the Washington Government in their dealings with South America, notably their indifference to the “piratrys” the insurgents exercised on vessels flying the flags of European Powers.

While no actual invitation had been extended to

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

the United States to join in the debates at Aix-la-Chapelle, it is probable that Alexander would have eagerly welcomed the expression by the Washington Government of such a desire. The Tsar seems to have considered, logically enough, that to legislate with respect to American affairs without the presence *pro forma* of the principal American Power was to invalidate the measures thus determined.

Another direct appeal to be represented at the Congress had, however, been received by the Tsar from the American insurgents themselves. While the United States had consistently refused — from reasons of traditional policy — to associate themselves with Alexander's plan of a World Confederation, Rivadavia, the representative in Europe of the Junta of Buenos Aires, addressed himself to the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs in terms that could only be gratifying to the Tsar's notions of the rôle reserved for the "Sovereigns of Europe."

Rivadavia had desired Nesselrode to make known to his august master the intention of the Government of the United Provinces of South America: "to manifest its sincere desires to establish relations between the Old and New Worlds which will guarantee a sound basis for future peace."¹ In view of the subsequent development of the policy of the United States under the terms of the Monroe Doctrine, the above direct appeal by the South American repre-

¹ MS. Archives, Russian Foreign Office.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

sentatives to the assembled Powers of Europe is not without significance.

The situation as viewed in Washington may be gathered from the instructions issued by the State Department to the new Minister, Mr. George W. Campbell, who was sent in April, 1818, to St. Petersburg.

In spite of the traditional friendship felt for Russia in the United States, there were reasons to believe that Alexander's American policy was not wholly disinterested. As the Portuguese Minister had already hinted, the European Alliance was not only preparing to take a hand in settling the disordered affairs in South America, but Russia was also seeking to establish her own power more firmly on the American continent. Adams wrote in evident alarm to Campbell, "that the European allies have hitherto withheld from the United States all their proceedings on this intended mediation between Spain and her colonies." Campbell was, therefore, instructed to watch with care the development of Russian policy.

The dangers which confronted the President and the Secretary of State during the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, in formulating their policy with respect to European affairs, were not imaginary. The secret *dossiers* of the Russian Foreign Office offer proofs that the trained diplomacy of Adams and Monroe, in clinging to the policy of isolation set forth by Washington and refusing their adhesion to this earlier

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

League of Peace, chose a course in accord with the best interests of the whole American continent.

The Russian plan of mediation is a highly interesting document. It brings to the attention of the European Powers the importance of a new factor in international affairs: the growing power of the young American Republic. The original was marked "Confidential," and "Submitted by the Plenipotentiaries of France and Russia to their colleagues as wholly confidential and reserved for their own information." It was also further stated that this document is "in no case to be inserted in the Protocols of the Conference."¹

A cautious preamble set forth the Tsar's views of the attitude to be adopted by the Powers of Europe toward America. The general line of policy thus laid down was probably no secret to the Washington Cabinet:

A deplorable happening which would cause irremediable differences in the development of the situation would be the recognition by any power of the government set up by the insurgents. Unfortunately, this is not an improbable event. The popular party in the United States, much strengthened of late, is preparing to make a strong effort to secure the recognition of the independence of Buenos Aires during the next session of Congress. Consideration of their actions reveal their ambitions to make of the American Continent one Grand Confederated Republic at the head of which will be found the United States. In the actual state of affairs, the United

¹ MS. Archives, Russian Foreign Office.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

States centralizes all its efforts in developing its resources and population. It is directed by a moderate policy and does not offer a menace to Europe. This would not continue to be the case should a large portion of South America adopt its institutions. A whole republican world, young, ardent and enriched by the production of every climate, will then set itself up in opposition to an old monarchical Europe, overpopulated and shaken by thirty years of revolution. This is a perspective worthy of the earnest consideration of all European statesmen. The consequences of all this might be incalculable.

The Russian Memorandum then proceeds to prove with what care Europe should seek to prevent, or at least retard, the growing relations between North America and the new states formed in the south:

The essential point is to gain time; a united representation by the Powers of Europe would undoubtedly have a great effect on the American Government. . . . It is believed that the Plenipotentiaries of the Five Powers at Washington should take the steps necessary to persuade public opinion in the United States, as well as the Executive, to adopt their point of view. This delicate negotiation should be conducted with much care. Verbal communication would be preferable to written notes — in order to avoid giving ammunition to the opposition, who would seize upon the idea of foreign influence as contrary to American institutions. . . .

The closing paragraph of this extraordinary diplomatic document shows the Tsar ready to turn American "idealism" to the purposes of his own diplomacy:

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

It would be advisable that these overtures be made only with the intention of examining more carefully — before taking action — the results which might follow an intervention in America. These results would probably be obtained most easily should the United States finally be invited to send a Plenipotentiary to confer with the other Powers. They could be told they were themselves a European people, Christians, and, therefore, like Europe, interested in questions of a general nature.¹

Here was the secret of Polética's renewed negotiations to induce the Government at Washington to accede to the Holy Alliance! Had the invitation to form part of the European system (already conveyed through Capo d'Istria at St. Petersburg and Dashkov at Washington) been accepted, the Envoys of the United States would have found themselves at Aix-la-Chapelle either in a minority with Great Britain, opposing the mediation asked for by Ferdinand, or else (as Alexander hoped) throwing the weight of their influence in support of the Russian proposals. To accede to the latter would have ended in limiting the action of the United States in America, while the Powers of the Holy Alliance imposed their own policy through "concerted action."

VI

THERE is thus every indication that ample grounds existed for the misgivings of the American Cabinet concerning the intentions of the Congress of Aix-la-

¹ MS. Archives, Russian Foreign Office.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

Chapelle to "legislate" with respect to American affairs in a sense favorable to a "European System" — rather than in the interests of the colonies. In a dispatch from St. Petersburg, written in April, 1819, Adams was informed of the lengths to which the Tsar had been prepared to go in his enthusiasm for a Universal Peace based upon International Action:

About the close of the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle instructions were given on the part of this Government to put into a state of preparation for active service, at the opening of spring, twelve ships of the line, besides other vessels. This step was taken with the view of being prepared to coöperate with Spain, should it become necessary in imposing measures relating to her revolted colonies as [*sic*] might be adopted in accordance with the recommendations of the Allied Sovereigns, and under an impression that she would acquiesce in the course proposed by them of mediation, as stated in my last. Not long after the return of the Emperor, however, to this capital, the foregoing instructions were, it is said, countermanded and the usual number of vessels directed to be prepared, in consequence, it is believed, of information received by this Court that Spain was not disposed to pursue the course suggested to her by the crowned heads at Aix-la-Chapelle.¹

Alexander's doctrinaire enthusiasm refused even to be dampened by the failure of the mediation he had hoped would restore King Ferdinand to his rule as Emperor of the American Indies. His gratification with respect to the accomplishments of the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle was openly expressed. A document

¹ MS. Archives of the Department of State.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

preserved in the files of the Russian Foreign Office contains the following summary of the results he believed had been obtained:

The conferences of Aix-la-Chapelle have beyond the power of any denial added to the progress of the European System. This System is now based upon existing common transactions, and the Cabinets of Europe have been able to recognize and appreciate its governing principles. *In the future no questions of a general nature can be too difficult or complicated for its application.* Precedents for the treatment of such questions will be found in the Acts and Transactions of the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle.

The Grand Alliance, therefore, has gained in two ways: first, a fresh proof has been given of its solidarity, and, secondly, new rules of conduct applicable to the future have been deduced, ensuring the maintenance of peace and union between the Allied Powers.

With all the simple faith of a man of one idea, the Tsar was already planning an Allied General Staff. That industrious publicist, the Abbé de Pradt, believed he was contemplating an "Armada" flying the cross of a legitimist crusade overseas. In spite of the contradiction involved, he was more determined than ever before to secure the adherence of the United States to the "General System."

The Envoy of the Holy League was the Chevalier de Polética. The new Russian Minister reached the United States in April, 1819, and soon after laid his programme before Adams. He had counted on the latter's diplomatic troubles with Europe as a text for

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

his sermon on the League. But the diplomacy of the Monroe Administration had profited by the embarrassments of the King of Spain to secure what appeared to be a settlement of the long standing difficulty with respect to the Floridas. Polética, on his arrival in Washington, found a treaty between Ferdinand and the United States already signed and that affair, as Adams expressed it, "standing under a very different aspect from that which it wore when his instructions were drawn." "The differences between the United States and Spain," he wrote with pardonable exaggeration, "were assuming a character which threatened the peace of the world. They had reached a crisis which it was scarcely possible could terminate but by a peace or rupture. When Mr. Polética received his instructions they were at the most dangerous and menacing period. When he arrived here, they were all amicably adjusted."

Adams soon observed that Polética promised to be a "very troublesome person." He appeared determined to give to his Mission all the importance of a great Embassy. He asked that the Russian Consuls in the United States might be introduced to the President as part of his staff, saying that he could be "responsible for all of them" except the Consul in Boston "who was an *author*." As opposing the Secretary's favorite method of "negotiation in frock coat, pantaloons, and a round hat," his correspondence had the flavor of "court-dress and bagwig." He in-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

quired punctiliously regarding the "titles of honor" in use in Washington, and showed a tendency (speedily suppressed) to treat Adams as "Your Excellency."

During the greater part of these interesting negotiations President Monroe was absent from Washington, and, while the policy developed was strictly in accord with the previous stand of the Administration, the whole brunt of dashing the Tsar's internationalist dream fell upon the Secretary of State. His greatest triumph lay in the fact, that (as on another important occasion) he was able to perform his ungrateful task without showing an "unsocial or sulky spirit on the part of the United States."

Política's obviously insincere and somewhat coercive tone was accepted in good part by Adams. He declared that it was the earnest desire of his Government not to be associated with the European Alliance, but to follow a policy wholly in unison with it. He added that "they were deeply impressed with the importance of preserving the general tranquillity of the world," and would do their part in helping to achieve this end. Adams seems fully to have recognized the fact that so long as Spain, Russia, and Great Britain remained American Powers, any real isolation was impossible. During the recent Napoleonic period, America had become the great "carrying nation," and, in spite of a scrupulous respect for neutrality, had become involved in a war with Great Britain, and in a quasi-war with the lat-

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

ter's great opponent. The seismic influence of the European situation had been felt as powerfully in America in 1814 as a century later. In proportion to her population, her foreign trade interests were immeasurably more important. Indeed Adams was now careful to assure the Tsar's Government that "the policy of the United States had been neutral between Spain and her colonies and that the United States wished to pursue a course for the future in harmony with that of the allies." He, however, added the following significant warning: "We cannot participate in, and cannot approve of, any interposition of other Powers unless it be to promote the total independence, political and commercial, of the colonies."

The all-important question now became: How far was the Tsar prepared to go in the support of his favorite theories? and would an active intervention by the Powers in American affairs result from his determination to impose respect for the conclusions arrived at during this conclave of the European Powers? At Adams's direction, Mr. Campbell reported at length with respect to Alexander's probable attitude. It was the conviction of this perspicacious observer that "he would not *separately* unite with Spain in war against the United States. It is, therefore, most probable he will use his great personal influence (for his manner is said to be very prepossessing), as well as that derived from the immense physical force he

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

could command, to accomplish his ends by overawing the councils of Europe without hazarding his present high standing."

Adams was now prepared to answer Polética's elaborately crafty diplomacy. Nevertheless, he continued to receive him in almost daily conferences. The Russian Minister was anxious to furnish him with "all the protocols" of the recent Congress and to explain their intention. Without venturing a direct invitation, Polética painted an engaging picture of the advantages offered by the League:

It was intimated that if any questions should arise between the United States and the Governments of Europe, the Emperor Alexander, desirous of using his influence in their favor, would have a substantial motive and justification for interposing if he could regard them as allies, which, as parties to the Holy Alliance, he would.

Mr. Adams's frankness was, however, contagious, and Polética's devious approach to the real subject of his negotiations finally brought him to the point at issue. On June 17th, the Russian Minister informed Secretary Adams of the Tsar's desire that the United States should at least accede "unofficially and confidentially" to the Holy Alliance; Adams objected that the same reasons which had caused Great Britain to withhold her signature to this pact governed the policy of the United States; that the agreement was "a personal one between sovereigns, and therefore not appropriate for the consideration of a

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

constitutional state.” Finally, when Polética urged that the engagement implied “nothing specific” and that the Holy Alliance was a “League of Peace” and had hitherto preserved a universal peace in Europe, Adams — a sound constitutionalist — replied that, before taking any further steps in the matter, it would be “advisable to ascertain the disposition of the members of the Senate.”

VII

WHEN the Tsar’s Envoy first arrived, the President (later a notable fact) was absent from Washington on one of those triumphant “progresses” which marked his Administration. Adams had informed him that “he could say nothing positive on the subject until the President returned.” Nevertheless, when Polética at last formally presented his credentials at the Presidential Mansion, no further reference was made to the matter. There was merely “a brief complimentary address to which the President replied with equal brevity.” So ended the first direct overtures to induce the United States formally to adhere to the European System. In reviewing the situation Adams wrote:

In proportion as the importance of the United States as one of the members of the general society of civilized nations increases in the eyes of the others, the difficulties of preserving this system and the temptation to depart from it increase and multiply.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Adams was inclined, like the diplomats of Europe, to humor Alexander's internationalist enthusiasms. Referring to Polética's overtures, Henry Middleton, who had succeeded Campbell as Minister at the Russian Court, is instructed "that the organization of our government is such as not to admit of our acceding formally to that compact." Nevertheless, the Holy Alliance is treated in a temporizing spirit which shows the puzzling problem it offered to a nation that had traditionally placed its foreign relations on a plane of high idealism:

The President, while approving of its final principles and thoroughly convinced of the virtuous and benevolent motives which led to the conception and presided at the formation of this system by the Emperor Alexander, believes that the United States will more effectually contribute to the great and sublime objects for which it [the Holy Alliance] was concluded by abstaining from formal participation in it. As a general declaration of principles, the United States not only give their hearty assent to the articles of the Holy Alliance, but they will be among the most earnest and conscientious in observing them.

Adams's own views concerning the formation of an American System were further developed by a somewhat burlesque episode in which the Portuguese Minister played the principal rôle. The good "Abbé-Chevalier" who represented the fading colonial glories of His Portuguese Majesty was also obsessed with the idea of "concerted action." One day he proposed

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

somewhat bluntly to the Secretary of State that they should "concert together a grand American System." This offer was based upon the assumption that Portugal and the United States were "the two great Powers of the western hemisphere." Adams, who had a personal liking for the Portuguese Minister, restrained his somewhat caustic appreciations of this offer; to his diary, however, he confided: "As to an American System, we have it; we constitute the whole of it; there is no community of interests or of principles between North and South America."

In 1822, the bitter wrongs of the Christian population of Greece inspired an eloquent paragraph in a Presidential Message which preceded by a few months the great document laying down the principles of the Monroe Doctrine. The cautious Secretary of State was assailed by indignant appeals urging some form of action in favor of "our fellow believers." One correspondent with a taste for mixed metaphors declared that "three thousand Kentucky riflemen were ready to seize their long rifles and to leap like squirrels" to the protection of the oppressed women and children of the Morea.

Adams was now the threatened victim of an irreconcilable paradox. Carried away by a generous enthusiasm for the cause of liberty everywhere, American officials in Congress and even in the diplomatic service were continually embarrassing the Administration with their demands for "decisive action" in

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

favor of "the enemies of despotism" in all parts of the globe. Even the most determined supporters of an academic American "isolation" were the first to propose such measures as "authorizing the American fleets in the Mediterranean to coöperate with the Grecian insurgents."

In the Cabinet (while Monroe's genial influence generally preserved a semblance of harmony) there were frequent criticisms of Adams's diplomacy and a tendency to make him responsible for the position of isolation with which the United States was now confronted.

Our disposition to discuss seems to have augmented, and the spirit of conciliation has manifestly abandoned our councils. We are determined to say sharper things than are said to us and to have the last word. . . . I have labored to restrain this predominant disposition of the Government, but have succeeded only partially in softening the asperities which predominate in the notes of the State Department. If these notes had been allowed to remain as originally drafted, we should, I believe, before this time have been unembarrassed by diplomatic relations with more than one Power.

The writer of the above (Crawford) was perhaps not unwilling to embarrass the Secretary of State with a certain personal responsibility in his conduct of foreign affairs — even a "tendency to estrange us from all foreign Powers."

In resuming the important question of Adams's part in the diplomacy of the Monroe Administration,

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

there is some temptation to overstress the importance of what may be called its subjective features, and the Adams "outlook on life" in general. It would be an exaggerated simplification of the case to attribute to the cantankerous, irritable, and suspicious "Adams tradition" our national trend toward isolation. Similarly, it is as obviously impossible to ascribe to the open, lovable nature of Monroe — the embodiment of the "Era of Good Feelings" — the generous sympathy for South American republicans and Grecian insurgents that complicated the former's task. In spite of temperamental shortcomings, Adams understood, perhaps better than any of his contemporaries, the psychology of his own compatriots, and their real wishes concerning their intercourse with foreign nations. Nor was he in any sense an "irreconcilable." In his old age we find him deeply interested in questions of "international organization," and even offering a prize and acting as a judge in the earliest recorded competition to discover the formula for a "League of Nations" in which the United States might take a part. But in the proposals made by Polética he recognized a form of internationalism in no way reconcilable with the ends of Americanism — a project based on motives wholly alien to our free institutions. The invitation to join the Tsar's "Holy League of Peace" (an incident whose significance with respect to the ensuing manifesto of the Monroe Doctrine has frequently been overlooked) gave Adams the first opportunity to

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

interpret in unmistakable fashion the aspirations of his countrymen regarding international organization. It was the preface to events which two years later "set the compass" of future American foreign policy.

VII

GENTZ: THE ERA OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

I

THREE years after the Congress of Vienna, the representatives of the Great Powers which had overthrown Napoleon met once more at Aix-la-Chapelle to discuss the affairs of Europe. It was an Austrian diplomat, Frederick Gentz, who was again elected to the important post of Secretary of the gathering. With this beginning of the "Era of International Conferences" came the same dependence upon "experts" and "political advisers" that marks the corresponding assemblages of the present day. Gentz was eminently fitted to perform the routine duties of his office. He possessed a rare talent for resuming, in a rhetoric that ignored underlying differences, the conclusions reached — or aimed at — by these august gatherings. Impressive language and conciliating phrases flowed naturally from his pen. His ability to say much and mean little — the essence of the "Diplomatic Style," admired by his contemporaries — amounted to genius. Moreover, in constructing his arguments (that generally so neatly canceled each other!), he could rely upon a store of precedents and parallel cases that defied all objectors. The pro-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

ceedings of the Congress gave ample scope for the exercise of all these abilities.

The Secretary of the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle had been bred to his task. Gentz's father — probably all his near male relations — were petty Prussian officials. The taxpayers of the small town of Breslau supported the whole family. The earliest toys of the little Frederick (born, 1764) may well have been beautiful scraps of red tape and shiny little lumps of sealing wax brought home by his bureaucratic parent on his exact returns from a comfortable office.

His education (at the expense of a paternal Government) was a long preparation for his future career. At Koenigsberg University, the philosophy of Kant threatened (but for a moment!) to upset the cherished routine of his earlier life. He studied law and "administration," but did not complete his courses. Rumors reached him that a position was vacant in Breslau, and so imperative became the atavistic call of the office-stool that he rushed home to apply for the place. At the age of twenty he was drawing a "stipend" and enjoying the privileges of a minor post with the irresistible title of "Secret Secretary to the General Directorium."

It required no less formidable a cataclysm than the French Revolution to separate Gentz from the congenial routine of his official destiny. During a long illness he had enjoyed the dangerous opportunity of reading — and thinking. By mastering French he



FRIEDRICH VON GENTZ

GENTZ

was able to read books that were too "pernicious" to be translated into German. The result must have been no less than appalling to his bureaucratic family. He became contaminated with the liberal ideas frothing and fermenting across the frontier.

Mindful of his traditions, he seems to have struggled manfully to drive the virus from his system. He learned English in order to translate Burke's "Reflections on the Revolution in France," and the cooling eloquence of the British statesman dissipated for a time his Jacobin fever. Then in a moment of terrible relapse he wrote and published an unfortunate letter addressed to Frederick William III on "The Necessity for the Freedom of the Press" and "A More Liberal Policy toward Agriculture." His career as a petty Prussian official was abruptly ended. Gentz's writings, which until now had been chiefly avocational, soon became his one source of livelihood. He wrote an essay, which was widely read, on "The War against the French Revolution" — an answer to Hauterive's *apologia*, "État de la France à la fin de l'An VIII." This showed signs of repentance, but the Prussian Government, anxious to preserve its neutrality at all costs, advised his family that he had better leave Breslau "for the time being." In an agony of apprehension for their own salaries, he was packed off to Vienna.

When Gentz arrived in the Austrian capital, he soon found himself at home in that great administra-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

tive center. His essays on questions of international finance — a subject on which “expert” advice is chronically desirable — soon brought him to the attention of Count Stadion, who ruled the Imperial Foreign Office. With all the characteristic energy of a born bureaucrat, he set about acquiring a new “official status.” This ambition was soon gratified by his new patron, who obtained for him the title of “Imperial Chancellor” without salary or duties. During his abundant leisure he now published an essay comparing the French and American Revolutions (which was translated and published in the United States by John Quincy Adams). Shortly afterward, he wrote a little work concerning “The Effect of the Discovery of America upon Europe,” which was to have important results on his career at a later time. But Austerlitz (and the terrible lopping-off of official careers that ensued in Vienna) once more drove him into exile. He visited London where Pitt and Granville enlisted him in their great campaign of what would to-day be called “propaganda” against Napoleon. Now began the really serious and useful period of Gentz’s career. Under the inspiration of patriotic indignation at his country’s wrongs, he published a series of really eminent studies on the international situation that was facing Europe. His “Fragment on the Balance of Power” was one of the most scholarly of many contemporary studies in the now familiar art of diplomatic “map-making.”

GENTZ

When Napoleon usurped the throne of France, Gentz was chosen to compose the well-reasoned and dignified protest through which Louis XVIII vicariously answered this blow of outrageous fortune. The patriotic *pronunciamento* of Prussia at Erfurt was also the work of his facile pen. So popular was this document that even Napoleon was forced to notice it — dignifying its author with the epithet of a “wretched little scribe,” and suggesting that his talents were at the disposal of “any one who would pay his price.” This was an undeserved reproach — as even his French biographer, Cléry, admits. Gentz was a “time-server,” a lover of place and emoluments, but he was not venal. While much of his life was spent in the service of foreigners (his best-known work is the collected series of the letters which he wrote to the Hospodars of Wallachia, perhaps the most complete and entertaining diplomatic history of their time), his patriotism and devotion to the cause of German Freedom were amply tested. During the dark years between Jena (1806) and Wagram (1809), he saw his native Prussia, then his adopted country, crushed in turn by Napoleon. Yet in the face of these disasters he steadily refused to become “reconciled” — as did many of his countrymen — to the “inevitable.”

For a few brief months in 1809, he actually exercised his almost forgotten title of “Imperial Chancellor” — drawing up at Stadion’s orders the Aus-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

trian ill-fated declaration of war on Napoleon. Then, after Wagram and the fatal negotiation of Schönbrunn, he became a refugee in Prague. "Hellishly blasé," he passed from one to another of the Bohemian watering-places, keeping bright his talents of diplomacy and intrigue by creating for himself a precarious "position" in the charming but almost inaccessible society of the old Austrian aristocracy. This trivial yet immensely difficult triumph, he succeeded in accomplishing. But by the time he was deemed worthy to be received, or at least tolerated, in the more liberal Viennese salons, the quasi-liberal, Protestant, Prussian petty official had become a Catholic and a tried reactionary.

II

GENTZ's meeting with Metternich — the outstanding representative of the *Haute Diplomatie* of his time — occurred soon after Stadion's resignation. After the crushing Peace of Schönbrunn, Metternich was placed in charge of the foreign policy of the Empire, never in so precarious a plight. He was not yet that "Metternich, Power's foremost parasite," of whom Byron wrote in his later political poems. Indeed, Gentz's admonitions to the dapper young David, chosen to defend the liberties of the Hapsburgs against the Napoleonic Goliath, were aimed to persuade him to be "less European and more Austrian." It even appears that Gentz — later the minor partner

GENTZ

in the tremendous enterprise of "stability and reaction" that is generally associated with Metternich's name — was primarily responsible for its inception.

Gentz's fame as an international statesman was to a great extent merged and obscured in the reputation of his associate. In a feudal organization like that of the old Empire no more brilliant rôle was humanly possible for a man of Gentz's humble origin. To Metternich, heir of a princely House, fell all the public credit for Austria's rehabilitation. His colleague drew his satisfaction from the understanding praise of the select circle among whom he moved — with all the graces of a tame cat. The *hochwohlgebornen* Duchesses of the Court, whose smiles greeted him from their carriages in the Prater, and the Chevaliers and the Barons of the less exclusive gatherings to which his talents obtained an entrance, understood the value of "that *clever* Mr. Gentz." This strange being asked for no further reward.

During the stormy days of the *Befreiungskrieg* Gentz was everywhere at his patron's elbow. His eloquent pen and his unerring political judgment were always at Metternich's disposal. Their complicated policies caught the Master of France in an unbreakable, silken net of intrigue. Napoleon, who had despised the "wretched scribe" in the days of his exile, now had reason to tremble before such an association of diplomatic talent. At Frankfort, at Chaumont, and finally at Châtillon the successes of his mili-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

tary campaigns were offset by a series of veritable diplomatic disasters. The foreign policy of Austria was raised to the height of a "tradition" by their efforts in the cause of the Grand Alliance — a tradition that governed the policies of Central Europe until the rise of the giant Bismarck.

After the downfall of the Napoleonic System and the dawn of the Golden Days of Diplomacy that ensued, it was the influence of these dinosaurs of reaction and stability that gave the deathblow to the generous international schemes of Napoleon's great adversary, the Tsar, in ranging the policies of the liberal states, Great Britain and the United States, on the side of constitutional government and the policy of non-intervention consecrated by the manifesto of President Monroe.

At the Congress of Vienna, where Metternich presided over the distribution of the spoils of the Napoleonic Empire, Gentz played an important but somewhat obscure rôle. In Isabey's great picture of the assembled diplomats, his place is among the "secondary personages," yet conveniently near to the Austrian Chancellor. He seems to whisper in the latter's ear those words of crafty advice that so often guided his patron's devious policies. For ten years or more the whole shadowy background of European diplomacy was to be alive with Gentz's undertones — and the rustling of his "secret papers."

Vienna had endowed Europe with a series of

GENTZ

“Final Acts” which were largely the work of Gentz’s industrious pen. These furnished a “legal basis” for the necessary common transactions of the Great Powers, and satisfied all the needs of a restored *Haute Diplomatie*. But liberal opinion was still unsatisfied. There was little promise in the “New Order” thus established that any of the interests of the “peoples,” to whom the Allied sovereigns had appealed in their struggle against the “Enemy of Europe,” would receive consideration. There was, to be sure, the “Sublime Idea” of the Tsar-Idealist. But the suspicion which, from the first news of its promulgation, had greeted this “Holy League of Justice, Christian Charity, and Peace,” placed Alexander’s cherished scheme under a ban. Practical politicians professed more and more to ignore its existence. In the British House of Commons the terrible Mr. Brougham had sarcastically asked why the sovereigns had “*merely* bound themselves to observe their mutual engagements.” Respecting their “determination to promote the Christian faith,” he inquired, “why was such protection necessary?” Castlereagh had replied that “if the sovereigns had not coalesced, Europe would never have been relieved.” But in private conversation he had qualified Alexander’s League as “a loud-sounding nothing.”

In April, 1818, a circular was prepared by the Russian Foreign Office, under the Tsar’s direction, setting forth at length the beneficent ends already

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

attained through the recognition of the principle of international solidarity. The Powers were exhorted not only to continue an unalterable devotion to the system set up by existing treaties, but also to unite in closer bonds. In the form of a "Confidential Memoir," this document was communicated to the Cabinets of Europe. Two of Alexander's favorite ideas, grouped in the following sentence, find a prominent place:

The wrongs under which all humanity groaned during the *revolutionary* struggle were the inevitable consequence of the errors of the past, namely, *individualism* and *partial or exclusive political combinations*.

The Tsar also declared now that the Treaty of Alliance of November 26, 1815 — "consecrated" by the Holy Alliance — had provided the machinery for a real European Government. In a series of congresses (wherein the representatives of the Powers might deliberate in common upon all matters concerning the general welfare) he saw the inception of a European Legislature. In spite of the example afforded by the Congress of Vienna, he would apparently set no limits to the usefulness of international debate.

But in the application of this policy he found himself opposed, not only by Great Britain, but even by Austria and Prussia. Both of these Powers believed that a Congress such as the Tsar now proposed — one including Spain and the lesser Powers — might readily lead to embarrassing complications with re-

GENTZ

spect to the participation of France. Persistent rumors emanating from St. Petersburg even affirmed that the Tsar, dissatisfied with the conduct of his allies, was meditating an alliance with the restored dynasty of the Bourbons. The outcome of this situation was a compromise: Alexander obtained the Congress he so ardently desired, set for September 30th, at Aix-la-Chapelle. But in spite of Spanish protests and Ferdinand's complaints that Russia had abandoned him, it was decided to restrict this gathering to the representatives of the four Great Powers. Before this tribunal Richelieu, the French Prime Minister, was invited to appear to give an account of the state of affairs existing under the restored monarchy.

The question of the "indemnities" still due from France under the terms of the Treaty of Paris was the chief reason for continuing the Allied military occupation. The amount fixed in reparations for twelve years of Napoleonic aggressions had been placed (in spite of Prussian protests) at a very reasonable figure. In comparison with the crushing war indemnities that became the custom of a later day, the six hundred million francs demanded of the French Government offers a generous contrast to the outcome of the Franco-Prussian War and the more recent cataclysm. Of this amount 265,000,000 francs still remained to be paid at the date of the gathering at Aix-la-Chapelle. An offer had been made by a group of financiers (headed by the great English house of Baring) to take

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

over the debt in the form of an ordinary "public obligation." They asked but one and one half per cent "for their trouble and risk." This arrangement, promptly agreed to, was the final transaction that, with surprising unanimity, brought the occupation to an end. But the restored monarchy wished to be readmitted to the councils of the nations. This precipitated a long debate.

The accepted basis of the Quadruple Alliance had, through British insistence and Castlereagh's Treaty of Chaumont, been confined to military ends. It was manifestly out of the question to include France in a treaty directly aimed at keeping her "in order." The Tsar now proposed as a solution a Federation of Europe — based on the bond of the Holy Alliance. "It is impossible," wrote Castlereagh, "to doubt the Emperor's sincerity in his views, which he dilates upon with religious rhapsody." In language for which the mystical diplomacy of Madame de Krüdener was largely responsible, the Tsar maintained that the "results thus far achieved" were due less to the uncertain combinations of men than to that Supreme Intelligence to which the Sovereigns had done homage by their act of September 26, 1815. After ascribing the woes of humanity to "egoism and partial combinations in politics," the Tsar's Memorandum closed with a magnificent invocation to "Christian Morality" and the "Rights of Man." This significant combination of new ideals and revolutionary formulas

GENTZ

marked the curious variations through which the Autocrat's political philosophy had passed. He now suggested a General Alliance that should include France and have for its main object "the guarantee of territorial possession." But the idea of accepting a form of treaty whose "heart" would consist in a general inflexible guarantee was wholly unacceptable to the British people. In this respect Parliament had already definitely approved Castlereagh's policy of "reservations." Liverpool had written him, just prior to the gathering at Aix, "We must recollect, and ought to make our allies understand, that the ultimate discussion of these things will be in the British Parliament."

To the able diplomacy of Frederick Gentz, Castlereagh left the ungrateful task of moderating the Tsar's idealism. The result was a masterly compromise. Alexander and Capo d'Istria were already "in conversation disposed to push their ideas very far in the sense of all the Powers of Europe being bound together in a common League." They were informed by Gentz and Castlereagh that, while "the benign principles of the Alliance of September 26, 1815, may be considered as constituting the European System in the matter of political conscience," it would be "derogatory to this solemn act" to mix its discussion "with ordinary diplomatic obligations." The various forms in which a more mundane diplomacy might continue, the "unparalleled unity of design with which

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

the Cabinets have acted," were next fully considered. The solution at last proposed was a reaffirmation of the principles of Chaumont and a recommendation that France be permitted to form part of a separate "Quintuple Alliance" without prejudice to the former agreement. This course, with certain modifications, was the one adopted by the Congress. While the balm of Gentz's inimitable style was thus poured on the troubled waters of international diplomacy, the Tsar's determination for a "League of Peace" was again safely postponed.

The Congress had opened ominously. Even over questions of general interest, such as an international police, the slave trade, and the plight of the Jewish race in some of the more backward countries of Europe, the harmony which had marked the earlier sessions of the "World Councils" began to disappear. Alexander, troubled by the general refusal to accede to his ideals for "a concerted action," insisted upon making the plight of the King of Spain in his relations with his American colonies a matter for general consideration. The "Mediation" already undertaken by the Powers between this unpopular monarch and his American subjects was a proper subject — the Tsar believed — for European intervention. American questions became, almost inevitably, the chief business discussed by the Congress. The assembled Powers soon found it convenient to overlook their own particularistic interests

GENTZ

and to join once more with cheerful unanimity in renewed admonitions to the United States. In the meeting of November 11th, the Congress took cognizance of a memoir drawn up by Count Palmella, the Portuguese Envoy, concerning "the piratrys exercised by a band of scoundrels navigating under unrecognized flags."¹ By this term was intended, not only the insurgents of South America, but also the privateers fitted out in North-American ports to aid these revolutionists. Palmella proposed "that the Ministers of the Five Powers in Washington should be instructed to act in accord with the Ministers of His Most Faithful Majesty [the King of Portugal] in order to obtain the renewal of the act by which the arming of corsairs in the United States was forbidden." On the 13th of November, the Duke of Richelieu, to whom Palmella's memoir had been referred, reported that the "United States should be included in the proposed League of International Maritime Police."

From the very beginning, the real interest of the sovereigns grouped in the Holy Alliance was evident. Their anxiety for Ferdinand was dependent on preserving the European institution of Monarchy in the New World! Great Britain was chiefly anxious respecting her commercial privileges. Capo d'Istria now proposed as a substitute for the Tsar's earlier scheme of intervention a collective note asking Madrid "to suggest remedies in detail." He added, in a

¹ MS. Archives, Russian Foreign Office.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

burst of frankness: "It is realized that no one knows the real situation in America or the circumstances of the insurrection well enough to judge whether the remedies proposed would be effectual." It was then recalled that the indispensable Gentz in his youth had written a thesis on "The Effect of the Discovery of America on Europe" and must therefore be considered an authority on American affairs. He was charged with drawing up a full "report" for the Congress. It was this High Priest of Legitimacy who was left to frame the solution by which a European System would exert its beneficent influence upon the pretensions of the United States.

III

HAD Gentz, besides an extraordinary talent for the technique of diplomacy, been gifted with a broader view of international statesmanship, the results might have been incalculable to the history of international organization. But Austrian policy was concerned with but one end: Stability in Europe. American affairs to both Metternich and his *alter ego* were unimportant except as manifestations of the revolutionary spirit. The real peril, they felt, lay nearer home.

Metternich's first idea had been to allow the newly formed Federal Diet created at Vienna to take action against the "perils" which, he believed, confronted the German Federation. Gentz, however,

GENTZ

realized the danger of allowing the voice of Liberalism an opportunity to be heard in public places. His own plan involved a diplomatic solution in line with the Tsar's international programmes. Two private reunions of the interested Powers were to be held. In the first of these, the Conference of Carlsbad, only Austria and Prussia were to take part, together with the representatives of four or five minor German states, without influence or voice in the chapter. A second conference, he suggested, might then safely be held in Vienna, formed of chosen delegates from all the member states of the Confederation. This would in turn modify the fundamental laws sufficiently to enable the recommendations of the Carlsbad Conference to be carried out.

Gentz's programme was carried out almost to the letter. Events in Germany again helped to forward this policy. At Toeplitz, the King of Prussia heard that enthusiastic meetings were being held all over Prussia in favor of Liberal reforms. In three days Metternich imposed upon the now terrified and repentant Hohenzollern the programme already determined upon. He even exacted a promise that the King would permanently renounce all plans of granting constitutional representation to his people. The vacillating monarch promised his help to extend these principles of reaction to the whole of Germany. The celebrated "Decrees of Carlsbad" were the fruits of these interviews.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

While the Tsar (together with the Cabinets of Great Britain and France) viewed with growing alarm the preponderating power exercised by Austria and Prussia over the newly "united" states of Germany, their concerted action was nevertheless inevitably forced to follow the reactionary lines laid down by Metternich and Gentz. Respecting his own German policy, Alexander still clung firmly to the illusion that he was a "Liberal" and the champion of international "right." When his brother-in-law, the King of Württemberg, maintained his determination to grant a constitution in the face of the protests of Austria and Prussia, the Tsar found that his policy needed a new formula. Insurrection and revolution on the part of subjects against their Kings were inadmissible. On the other hand, the voluntary concession of liberal institutions by Kings to their subjects, he held, must be regarded as "a sacred privilege." In this connection, it must be noted that the King of Württemberg had addressed his appeal to Alexander "in the name of Liberty and the free exercise of the monarchical principles guaranteed by the Holy Alliance" — a last occasion when the principles of this mystical pact were to be invoked in the cause of popular reform.

Reactionary fears were justified by the series of revolutions which followed the popular uprising of January 1, 1820, led by Riego in Spain. Constitutional movements soon spread over the whole south-

ern part of Europe, and repression through "intervention" became the chief concern of the Powers confederated by the "League of Justice and Peace."

The King of Spain, after his unsuccessful attempt to obtain the intervention of the Powers assembled at Aix-la-Chapelle, had found himself almost powerless to stem the tide of victorious revolution in his American colonies. All the resources of his kingdom had been expended in preparing a great military expedition, which during the year 1819 vainly awaited the necessary transports on the Island of Leon, near Cadiz. The Spanish uprising had its origin among these troops. Within two short months the revolutionaries obtained their ends. The army proclaimed the readoption of the Constitution of 1812, and the ignoble Ferdinand hastened to accept the situation — pretending to accede as graciously as possible to the popular wishes.

As Metternich had prophesied at Aix-la-Chapelle, constitutional government now became the question of the day. A few months later, a revolution similar in its aims to that in Spain broke out in Sicily, where on the 6th of July the Spanish Constitution was accepted by the King. A third constitutional revolution took place in Portugal, where the same document was again proclaimed (on August 23d).

The Tsar now sought an opportunity to propose an intervention between the King of the Two Sicilies and his subjects, thus making the Neapolitan revolution

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

a matter of European rather than of exclusively Austrian concern. Metternich, from reasons of policy, at last agreed to Alexander's favorite plan — a European Congress. This solution once decided upon, the opening of the debates was set for October 20, 1820, at Troppau. The invitation to Troppau came at an awkward moment for Castlereagh. "We know to what point the Tsar wishes to push the principle of Alliance," he said. "The five Powers would soon be a sort of European Government. It would be universal monarchy, the dream of the Abbé Saint-Pierre!"¹

But from the beginning the differences separating the Powers represented were even less likely to result in unity of action than at Aix-la-Chapelle. Castlereagh refused to join the Congress desired by the Tsar, and sent Lord Stewart instead. Troppau thus became little more than a reunion of the three monarchs allied under the terms of the Holy Alliance. The British (and the French) representatives were frankly present, not to take part in the "European" deliberations, but merely to furnish their respective Courts "with an accurate account of the debates." That strange product of modern diplomacy — the "Observer" — had begun his rôle.

In spite of these disillusionings, Alexander saw in the reunion of Troppau a new opportunity to proclaim to the world his favorite theory: the fraternal solidarity of the Great Powers, and their devotion to the

¹ Pasquier.

GENTZ

principles of concerted action. The right to exercise powers of supernational police among the countries of Europe was, he believed, to be vindicated at last. From the beginning of the Conference, however, he favored a policy which was directly opposed to the wishes of Metternich and Gentz. He renewed his contention that while a constitution which was the result of a revolutionary movement could not properly be recognized by the Allied Powers, it could, nevertheless, be granted by a sovereign to his people. The right of Ferdinand — if he so desired — to maintain the constitution already granted was therefore upheld. Alexander's own recently avowed intentions of granting a constitution to Russia made this course of conduct inevitable. Haunted by a doctrinaire determination to be "consistent," no other course appeared open to him.

A declaration signed on November 13th by the plenipotentiaries of Austria, Russia, and Prussia — the signatories of the Holy Alliance — formally announced to Europe a decision which seemed to respect the prejudices of Alexander while in fact affirming the most reactionary features of Austrian policy.

This declaration created a tremendous sensation among the friends of liberty. It read as follows:

Any state forming part of the European community which may change its form of interior government through revolutionary means, and which might thus become a menace to other states, will automatically

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

cease to form a part of the Alliance, and will remain excluded from its councils until its situation gives every guarantee of order and stability.¹

Although the Powers of the Holy Alliance alone signed this manifesto of reaction, its wording seemed to dedicate the whole power of the European Confederation to the suppression of Liberal reform. Castlereagh found himself obliged to disassociate his Government from the conclusions reached by the Congress. Even the Government of Louis XVIII followed suit. Fear of popular and parliamentary disapproval had united Great Britain and France in opposition to the Tropau Declaration.

Alexander now sought, in a measure, to placate Liberal opinion. In explanation of the manifesto, he again attempted to reaffirm the benevolent principles underlying his conception of a Confederated Europe. The medium chosen was a memoir, addressed to the Russian representatives in the principal Allied Courts. This document was especially intended to counteract the impression already prevalent "that the Triple Alliance is opposed by another formed of the Constitutional States," the latter group including, "besides England and France, the two Americas." After complimenting Austria and Prussia for their firmness "in the great task of reconciliation," the Tsar gave free rein to his resentment against England as the obstacle in the path of concerted action.

¹ Debidour.

GENTZ

The Tsar's attitude at Troppau was but confirmed during the adjourned sessions of the Congress held at Laybach (a spot chosen as convenient for the attendance of the King of the Two Sicilies). To give the proceedings a tone of formality becoming to an occasion which the Tsar chose to believe an important continuation of the "System of Congress," the Russian plenipotentiaries presented "an opinion concerning the forms and precedence to be followed during the deliberations of Laybach." "Far from having in view new political combinations," this memoir concludes, "the reunion is especially called to reaffirm the system which has given to Europe the blessing of peace by restoring independence to the nations." Instead of the "journal" of the proceedings kept at Troppau, the Tsar now desired to substitute formal "protocols" of the daily proceedings — signed by all the plenipotentiaries present. To humor these views Metternich applied to Gentz: "Veritable discussions were replaced in the minutes by convenient debates arranged by Mr. Gentz, who even composed the opposing arguments!"

The comedy so carefully staged by Metternich, wherein the King of Naples was to play the part of mediator between the Powers and his revolted subjects, was turning to a farce! The principal actor, King Ferdinand, was a pitiable object. He had left Naples, "his person decorated with the insignia of the Sects." Once beyond the frontier, he had cast

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

aside these degrading ornaments, but his trembling fear was apparent to all. Nevertheless, with feigned benevolence he now begged the Congress "not to proceed to extreme measures until all means of conciliation had been exhausted." The just anger of the sovereigns of the Holy Alliance having thus been appeased, Metternich next obtained the "approval" of Ferdinand to proceed to more active measures of coercion, which were communicated to Naples in the form of an ultimatum. The King, "now convinced of the futility of changing the disposition taken by the united sovereigns," summoned the Regent of the Kingdom, "to command his people to renounce all adherence to the political changes brought about by the revolution of July 2d."

Following the news of continued revolutionary successes in South America, a revolution broke out beneath the very noses of the assembled monarchs in the neighboring State of Piedmont. Here the Liberal Party (profiting by the departure of the Austrian expeditionary forces, which were to restore Ferdinand's authority) declared for a constitution similar to those successively adopted in Spain, Portugal, and Naples.

It required but a few weeks for the well-drilled armies of Austria to overcome the resistance of the Liberals in both Naples and Piedmont. But the lesson had not been lost upon Alexander. "The period of Troppau and Laybach" (writes Grand Duke

GENTZ

Nicholas) "was a crisis in the life and experiences of the Emperor. The impression made upon him was so strong that it lasted until the day of his death."

The terrifying "Red Specter" of Revolution now haunted the liberal Autocrat like a nightmare. Gentz's allotted task lay in keeping alive the almost morbid apprehensions of the former Tsar-Idealist. Metternich was soon able to write: "The Tsar sees only black where before he saw white." The mystical pact of the Holy Alliance became an instrument of the Austrian policy of repression.

Then was wrought a miracle of time: the hands of the clock seemed slowly to revolve backwards. Metternich and his "familiar" appeared actually to renew their youth. (Of Gentz, indeed, it was said he ambitioned a second childhood!) Among the Sèvres Shepherdesses of the *vieux régime* who once moved through the rococo gardens of Schönbrunn, none was more gallant than the former Secretary of the Congress of Vienna. Painted and perfumed he tottered after the lovely Fanny Elssler, shaking his gouty legs in caricature of her minuet. His narrow chest covered with orders and crosses (nearly all, it was sarcastically observed, "of the Second Class"), Gentz still angled and intrigued for further marks of royal favor — the last remaining trace of statesman-like ambition. Unlike Metternich, he was even spared the terrible awakening of '48. Till the end he considered the French Revolution as "an incident."

VIII

METTERNICH THE DIPLOMACY OF STABILITY

I

POSTERITY, to whose verdict he makes constant appeal in the pages of his "Memoirs," has perhaps judged unfairly both of the merits and intentions of Prince Metternich. Concerning his attainments as a diplomat (at least in the more restricted sense of that much-abused word) there can be no reasonable ground for argument. But the European settlement that followed the Napoleonic Wars demanded more than clever diplomacy. Of that broader statesmanship, which generously adjusts its viewpoint to changing conditions, even while deploring change, Metternich was wholly incapable. The pompous "Final Acts" of the great Peace Conference at Vienna were a monument to his genius for negotiation and compromise.

Not a few of Metternich's colleagues shared the widely expressed dissatisfaction of Liberal public opinion with the results of the "Congress of Nations." History records none of that ready championship of its perfections that meets any criticism of the present-day settlement of Versailles. Even Gentz, who was never charged with being a political dreamer, spoke critically of its failure to satisfy "legitimate liberal



METTERNICH

METTERNICH

aspirations." The world-statesmen of the Golden Age of Diplomacy were manifestly more cynical or less sensitive than those of a later time.

The trembling "Balance of Power" in Europe had been skillfully stabilized. Metternich's hope that history would allow to his favorite creation, the "System of 1815," credit for the thirty years of nearly unbroken peace that ensued among the Great Powers, has on the whole been unfulfilled. Into the justice of his claim, notably at the present juncture of international affairs, it is not unprofitable to inquire.

The Metternichs were one of those curious international families whose branches were once scattered in all the Courts of Central Europe. Diplomacy, to use the phraseology of the time, was his father's "natural condition." When young Clement-Wenzel-Lothaire was born at Coblenz, his parent was exercising his calling in the interests of the Archbishop-Elector of Trier. A few years later (with that lack of national prejudice that characterized a feudal aristocracy) the elder Metternich became the representative of the Hapsburgs at the Courts of the three Rhenish Electors. The pseudo-French atmosphere of these *petits Versailles* added its stamp of cosmopolitanism to the future Chancellor of the Austrian Empire. When (in 1788) he was sent to the University of Strasbourg, one of the subjects he was especially recommended to study was his "native" German language. This nationalizing process was, moreover,

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

avored by the course of events. A few months after he had begun his legal studies, the French Revolution chose to extend the blessings of liberty to these border provinces. The tyrannies and excesses of the Franco-philie Strasbourg republicans soon cured him of his Gallic ways. At the same time he lost a certain fashionable enthusiasm for "Liberalism" which nearly all the younger men of his time had begun to affect. For the remainder of his career "democracy" and "disorder" became synonymous terms.

The scenes he had witnessed at Strasbourg were repeated but a few months later at Mainz. He arrived, a much-ruffled, baggageless refugee, at Brussels. Here, pending a third onslaught of the French republican armies, he began a course in practical diplomacy as an *attaché* of his father's Legation.

This insight into the workings of the antiquated machinery of the old *Haute Diplomatie* disgusted him with the short-sighted and pretentious policies of the "shallow pates" controlling the Austrian policy of "anti-revolution." He wrote a report denouncing "faulty diplomacy" as the source of the lamentable unrest from which the world was suffering. The thesis announcing this "discovery" to the world has a not unfamiliar suggestion of the present day.

When the revolution, for the third time, thrust him across the frontier, he joined the growing colony of noble *émigrés* beyond the British Channel. In London, his high connections (and an excelling ability in

METTERNICH

all the forms of polite debauchery) soon made him an ornament of the Court circles which owned the Prince Regent as its bright particular star. Tired and tarnished in reputation, Metternich returned to Vienna (in 1795) to marry the young Countess Eleanor von Kaunitz, the granddaughter of the Austrian Chancellor. This marriage fixed the wavering fortunes of his career. The influence of the Kaunitz family was supreme at the Austrian Foreign Office. Moreover, the sorely perplexed officials of the Ball Platz were just then in search of a young man of Metternich's talents and experience to cope with the disconcerting "Citizen-Representatives" of the French Republic who were introducing Europe to the methods of "shirt-sleeve" diplomacy at the Congress of Rastadt.

His next important diplomatic post was that of Austrian Minister to the Court of Dresden. In 1804 he won an easy promotion as Ambassador to Berlin, and began his first struggle with Napoleonic diplomacy.

It is characteristic of his method that he began this long battle by cultivating the best possible relations with his opponents. It was not difficult for a man of his early training to appear entirely won over to French ideas. The French Ambassador saw in the very Frenchified young Austrian an ideal instrument for forwarding his master's plans of "isolating" Prussia. Metternich and the French Minister dined and wineed together nightly. The outcome of this

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

prandial negotiation was a disillusion to both Emperors, but the young Ambassador's fortunes were notably advanced by a suggestion emanating from Napoleon, that he should be transferred to Paris, which was eagerly acted upon by the Austrian Chancellor. In this new post Metternich cultivated the good opinion of the all-powerful Talleyrand — as redoubtable a charmer as himself — and embarked upon a politic flirtation with the Emperor's favorite sister, Caroline Murat.

His easily won success with womenkind was always turned to good account by Metternich. His diplomatic stratagems were often based upon the subtle influence exercised by the favorable opinion of the salons and the tea-tables of the capital. The parvenu "Great Ladies" of the Imperial Court were easily rallied to the support of a policy personified by "an aristocrat; tall, graceful, with auburn curls brushed back." It became the fashion to be pro-Austrian. Notoriously cold-blooded in the way he used his conquests, the supply of his victims seemed inexhaustible. Some great female personage (unknown to her rivals) always believed herself the beloved repository of his secrets. His methods seemed irresistible, but his own clear judgment was never affected by these *passionnettes*. The Minotaur demanded of his victims services that were often dangerous to their reputations, sometimes to their liberty. But whether Napoleonic Queens, Princesses, or

METTERNICH

Maréchaux (or the obscure anonymous beauties who according to rumor acted the part of his secret agents in half the Courts of Europe), women seemed never wanting to serve his devious purposes, even at the risk of falling into the grimy paws of Fouché's terrible spies.

II

AUSTERLITZ had reduced the proud Hapsburg Empire to a second-rate Power in the new European System. Never had the credit of the unlucky "King of the World" fallen to so low an ebb. When the Princes of the Rhine Federation withdrew from the Holy Roman Empire, Francis II resigned his secular dignities as heir of the Cæsars. The lawyers of the ancient Diet at Wetzlar ceased to wrangle over their eternal questions of precedence — who should sit upon red chairs, and who should sit upon the less honorable green — and returned home to face the realities of life forced upon them by Napoleon. With her armies defeated and terrified by the imponderable tactics of the French, diplomacy became Austria's only weapon of defense. In Metternich the Emperor found a Palladium.

Hovering, alert and resourceful, on the outskirts of the Franco-Russian negotiations at Tilsit, Metternich sought to adapt old Austrian policy to the new menacing state of affairs that had arisen in the Near East. He met the crisis involved in this union of

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Austria's two most powerful enemies, clear-eyed and resolute. The only possible hope for the future lay in frankly recognizing the weakness of Francis's military situation. Never arousing the enmity of either party to the uneasy Tilsit Alliance, Metternich's aim, until the disappearance of the Napoleonic danger, was to make Austria a shifting weight on the delicately poised balance of Franco-Russian relations. It was a policy which was to raise the prestige of Austrian diplomacy to the high pinnacle of a European Tradition.

Playing upon the jealousies and suspicions of both Alexander and Napoleon; picking at the flaws in the Imperialist programme forced upon the Tsar-Idealist by his conqueror; restraining the patriotic indignation of the proud Austrian Court, Metternich bided his time. Already the Master of Europe was becoming involved in the great adventure of the Russian invasion. His uneasy glances traveled in the direction of his vulnerable Austrian flank. Once more he began blustering to Stadion concerning "the rehabilitation of Austria's military power." The unendurable tone of Napoleon's diplomacy caused even Metternich to lose patience. He ventured to advise "a protest in arms" on the receipt of exaggerated reports concerning the success of the Spanish patriots now attacking the French rear. The crisis was deferred until the following year. Then Austria's devoted battalions, garlanded with flowers and accompanied to the edge of

METTERNICH

the battle-field by the frail beauties of the Imperial Court, marched out to defeat at Wagram (1809). A second Austerlitz was the result of the Emperor's belief that military skill might be found even in an Archduke-General. The Austrian infantry earned the praise of the Conqueror — but their bravery could not outweigh the determined ineptitude of their leader.

Metternich at his post in Paris had skillfully prepared the diplomatic background of these futile hostilities. The favorite diplomat of the Paris salons returned to Vienna under guard in the baggage-train of Napoleon's victorious Guards. Even his country's enemies preferred him as a negotiator. Although he would have liked to avoid all connection with the crushing peace that the French Emperor imposed upon his master, he was ordered by Napoleon to undertake the thankless task of arranging the details of the imposed Treaty of Schönbrunn.

The curious corollary of the victorious Wagram campaign was the marriage of Napoleon to the Archduchess Maria Louisa. In this Iphigenian sacrifice Metternich played a characteristic part. The Tsar had refused to seal the Franco-Russian compact (reviving in Europe the old classical division of the Empires of the East and West) by giving his sister to his ally of Tilsit. Metternich sensed a long-awaited opportunity. To destroy the alliance that held Austria as in a vice, he did not hesitate to hold forth the higher glory of a Hapsburg marriage. Napoleon, he rightly

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

foresaw, could not fail to be dazzled by such an opportunity to found the dynasty of his Empire on so splendid a foundation.

Aided by Talleyrand, the first embarrassing overtures were quickly made — and accepted. There was strangely little opposition, even from the victim herself. Maria Louisa, “*bonne enfant sous le diadème*,” longed to be rid of the stifling etiquette of Vienna and to see for herself the pleasures of Paris. Metternich accompanied her to the French capital to draw what profit he might from this “brilliant *mésalliance*.” The advantages gained by Austria through this transaction were slender enough. The charm of Metternich’s methods had worn somewhat thin. Napoleon acted very much as a rich French bourgeois wedding the daughter of a bankrupt merchant. The ceremonies accompanying the marriage were a notable triumph of Parisian talent for the dramatic. (The *protocol* was devised by Talleyrand with the help of the foremost painters and stage-directors of France.) But toward the family of the dowerless bride, the bridegroom was cold. The Austrians had hoped at least for the abrogation of the most galling clauses of the Treaty of Schönbrunn. Napoleon’s parvenu pride, however, refused all concessions. All that Metternich obtained was a grudging apology for the political murder of the Tyrolean patriot Hofer (on whom, as on the Duke of Enghien, Napoleon had conferred a martyr’s crown). It is even doubtful, in the light

METTERNICH

of recent historical research, whether this curious alliance was responsible for the almost inevitable breakdown of the French Emperor's Russian policy. To Metternich's satisfaction this now became inevitable.

The eminent moment of his life — the triumph, almost personal, of his diplomatic genius over the irresistible military power of his adversary — was at hand. Napoleon from the first seems to have strangely miscalculated the value of his dynastic union with the Hapsburgs. With all the infatuation of a *rôtureur*, he appears to have felt the glory of Austria to be bound up with his own through this event. At St. Helena one of his rare confessions of diplomatic error concerns the obvious mistake he made at the time of the great Russian invasion in leaving Austria (still resentful and unappeased) on his vital right flank. He had, to be sure, Metternich's promise of military support "the day the Grand Army crossed the Niemen." Yet even his confident optimism could hardly blind him to the realization that Austrian policy from the beginning was guided by Metternich's formula: "Armed abstention." Metternich, in carrying out his programme, made but one error of judgment (and that one merely delaying the development of his position). He still believed in the military invincibility of Napoleon.

On December 10, 1812, Metternich learned that the terrible steppes road from Moscow was already

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

blocked with the shattered rout of the Grand Army. With obscure Cossack generals winning daily rear-guard actions over the most famous generals of Europe, Napoleon made a despairing appeal to his Austrian ally for a "Mediation." The overbearing tone of this demand — for Napoleonic diplomacy, even in this hour of disaster, could strike no other note — gave Metternich the excuse he sought for ignoring the "opportunity." The Tsar (once more afire with zeal for an "international settlement" of the affairs of Europe) was pressing his victorious campaign on the heels of the retreating French to an accompaniment of Liberal "manifestoes" and appeals to the people of Germany. The Austrian Chancellor was in no haste to force an issue which must soon decide itself. An easy victory for Russia, especially a Russia dominated by the strange mystical liberalism of Alexander, was as far from Austrian ideals as the hegemony of the Hapsburg's dominating son-in-law. All through the early months of 1813, Napoleon sent courier after courier along the Vienna road, storming, then pleading, for Austrian action. But the "*médiation armée*" was withheld.

The Grand Alliance was perfecting its plans at Toeplitz. Alexander's new "crusade" to save humanity took on its final form in a "chain of alliances." Metternich was still in appearance friendly with all parties to this "giants' quarrel." His policy was one of interminable negotiations. His worn traveling-

METTERNICH

carriage became a familiar spectacle to the outpost-sentinels of all the contending armies. Accompanied by his faithful "familiar," Gentz, he passed from headquarters to headquarters, a privileged and an anxiously attended guest. The fate of Europe was decided by his diplomacy. Providence was no longer "on the side of the heavy battalions." His was the hand that exalted or depressed the quivering scale of Victory. At one moment (after the success of Ney's conscripts at Bautzen) he seemed about to throw in Austria's lot with France. Napoleon, completely deceived, consented to a military truce. At Pleisewitz the victorious rally of the French troops gave place to renewed fatal negotiations.

Metternich (with full appreciation of the dramatic possibilities of the scene) tells the story of his famous interview with Napoleon at Dresden. His "Memoirs" involuntarily give the impression that it was only while passing through the anterooms of the Emperor's headquarters that his decision was finally made respecting the part Austria was to play in the struggle that ensued. Appraisingly he noted the bearing of the "Grand Officers of the Military Household" who crowded forward to greet him. The eagerness of these men, the most famous soldiers of their day, to be "through with war" impressed him from the first moment of his arrival. A marshal of France in full uniform tugged at his sleeve and whispered in his ear: "Remember that Europe needs peace." It

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

was Berthier "of Wagram" — even his title recalled memories of Austrian defeat. The impression made upon him by Napoleon (as he notes) was disillusioning. Since his last interview the Master of France seemed somehow "smaller . . . shrunken in his uniform."

In his pocket, we know, lay the crumpled, unsigned draft of a Treaty of Alliance between Austria and the Great Coalition. Did he intend to show this "talisman" to Napoleon as a guarantee of future loyalty or as a threat to extort new concessions? It is one of the crucial mysteries of history. On his honor "as a German Count" Metternich swore that "Austria was still disinterested."

In the hour of his greatest peril, Napoleon's diplomacy had but two methods — to terrify or to caress. He chose the former. He spoke of "*deux batailles gagnés*." His undiplomatic outburst was aimed at Austria's "*funeste intervention*." All a soldier's pent-up indignation at a comrade's disloyalty boiled over uncontrolled. He chose this fatal moment for sermonizing Metternich respecting the wrongs he had suffered at the hands of his father-in-law. He suggested Austrian venality and dangled Illyria as "the price." With malicious intention of recalling their relative positions, he let fall at the Austrian Chancellor's feet the famous tricornered hat that he had made the *fétiche* of so many battle-fields. Metternich, with a satisfaction that he notes in every petty detail,

METTERNICH

ignored the gesture. Napoleon in his excitement kicked the symbol of victory across the floor — then picked it up himself!

To secure a continuation of the armistice until August became the object of the Allies. All parties were aware that such a respite would enable Schwartzburg to take the field. But on which side? Napoleon, as Metternich knew, could not now refuse to “trust” Austria. The question was agonizing. Then from Madrid came the news of further disasters. Joseph Bonaparte, the improvised King of Spain, had shown a truly Royal ineptitude to command an army. He had been caught, encumbered with Spanish “treasures, pictures, and favorites,” and beaten by the Anglo-Spanish forces at Vittoria. The last scene was set for the Imperial tragedy.

The long account of his diplomatic duel with Napoleon contained in Metternich’s “Memoirs” stresses the personal side of their interviews. The impression is, perhaps over-artfully, given that this fateful struggle was a clash of wits and personalities rather than an opposition in the policies of two great Empires. Measuring himself with Napoleon, he found the latter “small.” The supreme self-confidence — not to employ a harsher term — of the Austrian Chancellor anticipated, by many months, the final outcome. Napoleon was never a greater general than in the last fatal campaign. Yet, in comparing the diplomacy of the Emperor with that of his opponent,

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

the conclusion cannot be avoided that in this field, at least, he had met his master.

III

VICTORIOUS, the Tsar's earlier constructive programmes of "international order" lost their appeal. Physically worn out by the gigantic task of saving first Russia, then Europe from the French, he suddenly lost faith in his old beliefs. He sought to reverse the currents of Liberal progress in full tide of success. In all these events Metternich was to play a decisive rôle. He bent the Tsar to his own conception of a policy of "Stability" and "Repression" at the very moment when even a partial fulfillment of earlier promise held forth the surest means of constructive peace.

In August, 1817, Metternich wrote to the Emperor of Austria, explaining this change of policy:

Your Majesty must by this time be convinced that for a long time the Emperor Alexander has been incapable of following out consistently the same order of ideas. *Since 1815 he has abandoned Jacobinism to throw himself wholly into the pursuit of mystical philosophy.* Nevertheless, his sympathies have remained revolutionary and his religious sentiments follow the same trend. His interest in such gatherings as those of the Bible Society show this. Moreover, his strongest impulse is to make converts to his ideas. Following out this policy, in Italy he organizes Jacobin clubs, and aids the "Sects" throughout the rest of Europe. To-day his formula of "the rights of man" has but given place to Bible classes.

METTERNICH

The above was written when Metternich's fears with respect to Alexander's attitude toward the "Sects" — the revolutionary societies whose activities during the period of reconstruction following the Napoleonic Wars recall the Bolshevik propaganda of the present day — were at their height. His anxiety was soon to give place to active efforts to bring the Tsar under the influence of safer theories. In order to obtain his ends, Metternich did not hesitate to adopt the methods of the mystics and the *Illuminati* whom he openly stigmatized as charlatans. In place of their comminatory texts, their veiled warnings of a coming Anti-Christ, and their mystical doctrines of international fraternity, he substituted a definite programme: political reaction. His own formulas were imposed upon the impressionable mind of Alexander in a language not too far removed from the spirit of high idealism which now directed the Tsar's actions.

In spite of the marked change which had taken place in his own intimate beliefs, Alexander continued to regard with tolerance the spontaneous growth of Liberal movements. As late as October 4, 1816, the following paragraph appeared in the "Exprès du Nord," printed at St. Petersburg: "The liberty of the press, protected by our August Monarch, has the inappreciable advantage of allowing every truth to reach the foot of the throne; it can displease none but those who wish to isolate the Prince from his people,

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

and such men will never be listened to during the reign of Alexander."

The successful revolt of Germany in 1813 against the Napoleonic tyranny had fostered the growth of secret societies. Most important among these was the *Tugendbund*, or "League of Virtue," uniting the patriotic efforts of the students of the German universities. Alexander, who had welcomed their coöperation against the French Emperor, was at first not unfavorable to the activities of these associations in his own Empire. In the Russian army similar organizations "were very numerous and the great part of them very inoffensive. . . . Everybody made a point of belonging to some association of this kind." It was, indeed, "only on this condition that a man believed himself to be a friend of progress."

But, as Metternich was quick to observe, the formation of societies of a revolutionary character — as distinguished from societies like the *Tugendbund* — had begun. Under this new influence societies were founded on "blind obedience." The ceremony of initiation included all the emblems of dagger, pistol, and poison judged necessary by fevered imaginations to add to the solemnity of oaths. The members were divided into three degrees: "brothers," "men," and "boyars." From the latter class the "elders" or "directors," supposed to govern the policy of the "movement," were elected every month.

The issue was soon raised between the patriots of

METTERNICH

the German school who desired to bring about reforms through political action, and those who went to the extreme of affirming that such a transformation of the Russian Autocracy could be brought about only by "removing" the Tsar. The plans of the latter appear not only to have included the assassination of the Imperial family, but also a project to force the Holy Synod and the Senate to declare "a Provisional Government of the Empire." Such a substitution of King Stork for King Log appears inevitably associated with all Russian revolutionary movements!

The machinations of these Russian societies, cutting athwart the Tsar's own plans for Liberal reform, were undoubtedly known to Alexander some time before they were suppressed. With characteristic generosity, he long refused to believe in the treachery of the principal leaders — many of whom had been associated with his own projects. But Metternich's plans were ably adapted to help the Tsar in the dilemma.

IV

DID Metternich himself believe in the existence of the world-wide phantom revolution he conjured into being for the edification of the Tsar? It is possible that self-hypnotized by the "proofs" which his agents brought him from every country of Europe — and America — of the wide-flung conspiracy of the "Sects," he became a victim of his own "display of phantasmagories":

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

During the Congresses of Laybach and Troppau, it is certain that Switzerland became the center of the Sects. Here these dark forces established their headquarters and directed their efforts against northern Italy and the Spanish border. From here their agents also left for tours in Germany, Frankfort, and Holland. Lyons is probably the next point where the military forces of the Alliance must be employed to crush out the vast revolutionary plan. Such a well-grounded conspiracy could only have been set in motion through the toleration of the French Government or its minor agents.

The answer to Metternich is in the Tsar's own hand:

The entire line of conduct which I have adopted will prove to you what high value I attach to maintaining all those conservative principles to which during the last six years Europe owes its tranquillity.

In March, 1819, a fortuitous incident had placed in Metternich's hands the possibility of persuading the two monarchs most necessary to his plans of the dangers of their situation. Both the King of Prussia and the Emperor Alexander were already carefully "indoctrinated" concerning the grave dangers to which their liberal policies were subjecting the "International System" so carefully evolved at Vienna. Metternich, therefore, rejoiced almost openly at the political assassination of the writer Kotzebue by the student Karl Sand. This crime, perpetrated in the Kingdom of Prussia upon the person of a former Russian Councillor-General, gave the desired opportunity of rallying both Prussia and Russia to Austria's

METTERNICH

programme of reaction. The recrudescence of a Liberal spirit in Germany was especially obnoxious to Metternich. The growing power of the press was a menace to the paternalism of a feudal Emperor. In some of the minor states, patriotic editors began to spread strange doctrines of "unity" and "democracy" which were eagerly applauded throughout the new German Federation. In France the Liberal Ministry of Décazes overthrew the Tsar's friend, the Duke of Richelieu. In England, riotous reformers broke the windows of the Cabinet Ministers. Against this rising flood of liberalism the Austrian Chancellor was now to invoke the principles of "International Concert" that Alexander had consecrated by the Holy Alliance.

Metternich's task — so far as the Tsar-Idealist was concerned — was made easy by the morbid suspicions which preyed upon his mind. The Russian revolutionists, he now believed with the Austrian Chancellor, were but part of a great international society which Metternich called the "Sects." His eyes opened by the communications he constantly received from Vienna, he began to see everywhere their handiwork. As a natural corollary of such views, he began to assert that only through the "concerted action" of the parties to the Holy Alliance could this Union of the Powers of Evil be restrained. His Pact of Kings became a symbol of righteous opposition to the Dark Forces of Revolution. The personal danger which actually threatened the Tsar within the borders of his

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

own Empire became exteriorized in a policy of international repression.

In his state of morbid physical "breakdown," it scarcely required the pressing communications which he constantly received from Metternich to maintain Alexander in this belief. In considering the fury of blind reaction that took the place of his earlier Liberalism, it must be remembered that all the sovereigns of the Holy Alliance felt their lives and thrones threatened by the nameless "Sects" — the "Red Peril" of a hundred years later. Revolutionary movements were afoot in France, Spain, and Italy. To their fevered imaginations even the revolt of the Greek patriots against their Turkish oppressors began to assume the appearance of a revolt fomented by the "Sects" against a "legitimate" Sultan. The Tsar's prejudices were, of course, only strengthened and maintained by association with the other reactionary monarchs of Europe with whom he came into personal contact at Aix-la-Chapelle and subsequently at the Congresses of Troppau and Laybach. The subject of "secret societies" soon became the principal topic discussed, informally, at least, by these assemblies. To Metternich's satisfaction all the might of "organized Europe" seemed tending to one end — Counter-Revolution.

Metternich was not without allies among the Tsar's intimate circle of advisers. Many of these, including the mystical Golytzine, were constantly

METTERNICH

urging upon him vague plans of repressive action. From France the valetudinarian Bergasse beset him with "memorials" upon this subject:

Our Liberals enjoy a power all the more dangerous, because it is permanently supported by an ever-vigilant *secret backing*. This *secret majority* has its ramifications in Spain, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, and even in America, where its dogmas may be openly professed.

Therefore, Sire, I permit myself to recommend that in the coming Congress it will be necessary not only to destroy this *infernal sect*, which menaces with upheaval the whole civilized world, but also to take steps to root out the effect made by the doctrines spread through this means. It will not be possible to destroy the Sects without having shown in the most solemn manner the falsity of their doctrines and by having openly taken measures against these adepts through some form of public manifesto, justified by their excesses. Your Majesty will crown the work which he has so gloriously commenced. It is to him we owe the Treaty of the Holy Alliance. It will not be a single people who will thank him in the future for the whole of human society everywhere.

In the midst of the childish fears and preoccupations fostered by his correspondents, Alexander's opportunity for really constructive international remedies passed by. He became lost in a maze of petty conspiracies. His ideals became those of an "International Gendarme." The first of these ill-advised attempts to set in order the houses of his neighbors occurred in Greece.

Metternich's consent to test once more the practi-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

cal workings of his "Sublime Idea" was but part of a carefully calculated compromise — as the somewhat surprising sequel showed. But as far as Alexander was concerned, Metternich's fears were at rest. From now onward he held the Tsar — as though by the force of some uncanny incantation — a thrall to his own will. The diplomacy that had met and conquered the blustering Napoleon on the brink of the abyss of Frankfort, had in another great personal duel mastered the generous expansions of the Tsar-Idealist. As long as Alexander lived, the European continent was "organized," not in the interests of the great programme laid down by Novosiltzov's "Instructions," but in the interests of "existing privileges." Peace, as Metternich maintained, settled upon Europe till 1848 — but it was a peace "of the charnel house and the tomb."

V

THE Tsar-Idealist's conversion to the cause of reaction was soon to be put to a supreme test. In the measures taken against the secret societies of Russia an exception had always been made in favor of the *Hetairia*, an association whose object was to foster the growing spirit of resistance among the Greek patriots to the oppression of the Turkish Government. A natural sympathy was felt by the Russians with their coreligionaries. Moreover, a large party in Russia were convinced that the Empire's destiny lay

METTERNICH

in the Orient, considering Alexander's European adventures and his departure from Catherine's plan of Eastern conquest as a fatal step. The news that open revolt had broken out in the Moldo-Wallachian principalities, the autonomy of which were the fruits of Catherine's Turkish wars, reached Laybach shortly after the outbreak of the revolution at Turin. The leader of the Greek revolution was an ex-officer of the Russian army, the son of a former hospodar, Alexander Ypsilanti. Since the beginning of July, 1820, this rebel leader had made his headquarters at Kichenev, within Russian territory, where his open campaign against the Sultan had received every encouragement from the Tsar's officials. In his proclamation addressed to the Greek patriots, Ypsilanti had even ventured the following significant phrases:

Should the Turks in their desperation venture to make an incursion upon your territory, you have nothing to fear: a great power stands ready to punish their insolence.

Between his duty to his countrymen and their wishes and his devotion to his new international ideals, Alexander did not long hesitate. He felt that the moral obligation to maintain the bond of the Holy Alliance outweighed any doctrine of national or religious solidarity. Ypsilanti was degraded from his rank in the Russian army. The Russian Ambassador at the Porte, Baron Stroganov, was instructed to inform the Sultan that the Russian forces would

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

remain strictly neutral, and that the Tsar wished to be considered as wholly disapproving the movement. To La Ferronnays, representing the Government of Louis XVIII at Laybach, Alexander expressed himself with all the one-sidedness of a doctrinaire:

This outbreak has occurred when, as the revolutionaries believe, the sovereigns were occupied elsewhere. Moreover, they seem to have thought they had my approval of their course. Without paying any attention to what public opinion in Russia may desire, I have published to the whole world my disapproval of the insurrectionary movement.

So far had Metternich's pupil traveled along the paths of reaction that in the outbreak of a Christian population against the secular tyranny of a Mussulman Sultan he now saw only the machinations of a group of secret societies. He could even stretch the mystical language of his Holy Alliance to describe them as "anti-Christian"! In a letter of March 10, 1821, to his confidant Golytzine in Russia he wrote:

They evidently desire to create a diversion in favor of Naples, and thereby to prevent us from destroying one of the chief synagogues of Satan, established with the single intention of propagating his anti-Christian doctrine.

Alexander reached St. Petersburg on his return from Laybach on June 7, 1821. Hardly had he lost contact with the "spirit" of the Congress when doubts began to assail him as to the wisdom of his

METTERNICH

course in the Orient. From the moment he crossed his own frontiers he had been greeted everywhere with loud demonstrations in favor of the Greeks. Half-veiled threats and mutterings of dissatisfaction concerning the measures taken with respect to the late revolution reached him from every side. In St. Petersburg he found Stroganov awaiting him. The Russian Ambassador at the Porte had been an eye-witness of terrible scenes in Constantinople: Sultan Mahmoud had chosen Easter Day to perpetrate a crime peculiarly revolting to the Orthodox Russians. The Patriarch of the Greek Church — the leader of the Christian faith, which the Tsar had sworn to protect and cherish — had been arrested at the altar during mass. Clad in his sacred vestments, he had been hanged by Turkish soldiers at the door of the profaned shrine.

On February 28, 1822, the Porte threatened once more to interrupt the peaceful development of the diplomatic negotiations which Alexander (through Metternich's influence) had consented to initiate. An insolent note addressed to the Tsar required among other things the extradition of all Turkish subjects who had taken refuge within the Russian Empire. In order to calm Alexander's renewed hostility, Metternich resorted to a plan which he knew would appeal to the Tsar's favorite doctrines. During January-February, 1822, he proposed that the whole question of Greek independence should be regulated by a new

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Congress of the Great Powers. This was to be held in Vienna.

It was necessary, however, first to obtain the assent of the British Cabinet to a gathering wherein the question of the existence of the Turkish Empire might be decided in accordance with the system "consecrated" by the Holy Alliance. Metternich craftily pointed out to Castlereagh that in their exhausting struggle with the Turks — marked by terrible atrocities on both sides — the Greeks would necessarily come to a decision of their quarrel before its merits could be submitted to the ponderous judgment of Alexander's world tribunal. In the meanwhile, Lord Strangford, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, was urged to hasten an arrangement which would guarantee an early peace.

Metternich had succeeded once more in making Vienna the center of world negotiations. The Russian troops, which to the joy of all Russian patriots had already advanced as far as Vitebsk, received orders to return to their garrisons, and a Russian Envoy, Tatistcheff, preceded his master to the Austrian capital in order to commence negotiations along new lines. As a final guarantee of his determination to submit Russian differences with the Porte to the concerted action of the Powers, Alexander even consented to dismiss from his councils both Capo d'Istria and Stroganov, the principal promoters of the war movement in Russia.

METTERNICH

Thus, while Byron sang the heroic deeds of Marco Bozzaris, and embarked upon the "Modern Crusade" which so moved the "classicists" of the early nineteenth century, while the passes of Thermopylæ once more saw the hordes of Asia stopped and beaten back by Greek defenders, the diplomats of the Holy Alliance continued their negotiations. The Tsar's faith was renewed that an application of the formulas of his "League of Christian Charity and Peace" would enforce order in a distracted world. The enactments of another Congress were about to test once more the practical workings of his "Sublime Idea."

VI

THE Congresses of Troppau and Laybach had further estranged English policy from that of the Continental Holy Alliance. In the English House of Commons frequent representations were made to Castlereagh that the policy pursued by Great Britain in the councils of the Great Powers was not consistent with the ends pursued by a great Liberal democracy. The avowed policy of the Holy League of Sovereigns was believed to be no less dangerous from the respectable motives alleged on their behalf.

A contemporary writer thus summarizes the situation:

A new era had commenced in the history of the World — a system of governing Europe by Congresses, instead of by separate and independent Governments,

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

was established. A scheme was formed, and actually begun to be put in operation, to destroy throughout the globe the just freedom of the people. And while all this mighty machinery was being put in movement, England was, if not a willing, at least a passive spectator.

It was in the midst of this "complication of affairs and jarring of opposite principles" that the nations learned that the three sovereigns of the Holy Alliance and the representatives of France and England were about to meet once more in a Congress at Verona. These international gatherings were now considered most suspicious by those of liberal opinions.

The tragic death of the Marquis of Londonderry — to which title Lord Castlereagh had succeeded on the death of his father — brought about little change in English foreign policy. George Canning, the new Minister for Foreign Affairs, was in no sense a radical. He had even been considered one of the decided enemies of reform, but his attitude with respect to English interests abroad had always been approved by the lovers of constitutional liberty.

Canning received the seals of the Foreign Office from the King on September 16, 1822. In inaugurating his policy he was determined not to lend the prestige of his new office either to the Congress in Vienna or to the subsequent gathering in Verona. It is, indeed, probable that Canning would have avoided, if possible, sending any English representative whatsoever to the latter gathering.

METTERNICH

The differences between Turkey and Russia continued in the hands of Austria and England, as mediating Powers. The Greeks were, however, sternly denied the assistance — or even the moral support — of the new Congress. The Tsar in his distrust of all revolutionary movements declared them wholly unworthy of sympathy, and even refused to allow the delegates (waiting the pleasure of the Powers at Ancona) a hearing before that body. In spite of an eloquent appeal which Andrew Maxis addressed to the Pope, their delegates were finally ordered to return to their distracted country.

In respect to Italian affairs, the decisions of the Congress of Verona were also in accord with the policy of the Holy Alliance. The mandate of Europe seemed permanently accorded to Austria to carry out the anti-revolutionary campaign proposed by Metternich, although the Pope still courageously protested against this tyranny.

With the exception of the above definite successes for the policy of the "Triple Alliance" — events which were in the main unopposed by England or France — the course of the debates at the Congress of Verona now tended undeniably toward a disintegration of the "European System," a fact which even Metternich saw no reason to deplore. Except for the final adventure of the Spanish intervention, the Tsar's League of Justice, Christian Charity, and Peace had run its course.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

In 1825 Metternich lost the aid of his principal supporter and pupil, the Tsar. So completely had poor Alexander the Well-Intentioned fallen under the influence of the Austrian Chancellor, and so distrustful had he become of his own good judgment, that in his later years he was reported to carry about with him a little book in which the names of all the statesmen, diplomats, and authors of Europe whom his mentor believed "unsound" were recorded alphabetically. If by chance one of the unhappy mortals who had fallen beneath the ban of Metternich's reactionary displeasure were presented to the Tsar, the August back was immediately turned. Nor could reasoning or appeals restore him to the Imperial favor. The closing years of his reign were passed under the shadow of imminent revolution and assassination, shadows that his Evil Genius in Vienna painted in more lurid colors as the threatening dawn of the Constitutional Era drew near. When his great convert died (or, as the peasants of Russia believe to the present day, wandered forth from his palace to live the life of a "Penitent" in the Siberian wilds), Metternich ruled supreme in Central Europe. His doting master, the Austrian Emperor, allowed him the supreme heraldic honor of quartering upon his arms the Imperial shield. His power was little short of dictatorship in all the lands of the old Holy Roman Empire. In Alexander's successor, the Tsar Nicholas, he found a forceful, if less pliant, ally. Peace — but the

METTERNICH

peace "of the charnel house and the tomb" — reigned on the Continent, broken only by an occasional fierce outburst of revolution. Metternich had become the Atlas upon whose elegant shoulders rested a restored world of feudal privilege, hereditary right, and monarchical reaction.

To the throttled liberal opinion of Europe Metternich embodied the Genius of Reaction. He was hated perhaps more widely than any human being of his time. In 1845, Robert Browning, in his poem "The Italian in England," wrote concerning him the terrible lines beginning:

"I would grasp Metternich until
I felt his red wet throat distil
In blood through these two hands."

But a man who seems sincerely to have held the belief that "Nothing below the rank of Baron is a human" could afford to laugh at "public opinion."

Only the Revolution of 1848, which swept over all Europe like an avenging storm, drove Metternich from the power he had grasped so firmly and wrecked his boasted "System." He professed to take his exile in liberal England as a grim, passing jest, and when the Tsar's troops and "Butcher Haynau" had once more made Vienna a possible place of residence for a mediævally minded statesman, he returned to his task of holding back the clock. But Francis Joseph, the new Emperor, was himself too young not to recog-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

nize that Metternich belonged to the past. Lingered on, through the Indian Summer of Reaction that succeeded the Year of Revolt, the ex-Chancellor devoted his last years to that final task of diplomats *en retraite* — his “Memoirs” — and *his* version of history.

Even until 1859, long after the last of his contemporaries had disappeared from the European scene, his influence was still vaguely felt in the great building on the Ball Platz whose policies for so many years had been little more than an echo of his will. Then he died — mercifully spared the spectacle of Sadowa and the triumph of Count Bismarck, a young diplomat who had learned but too well the lessons of “Real Politik” taught him by Metternich himself.

IX

CHATEAUBRIAND: THE MONROE DOCTRINE

I

WHEN that brilliant *littérateur* — and occasional statesman — Chateaubriand died in the year 1848, he left behind him fourteen ponderous volumes of “Mémoires d’Outre Tombe.” He had intended to seal up these veracious accounts of many activities, and, as the title indicates, to defer their publication till some years after his death. But events that marked the closing months of his life, and a very human desire to judge for himself the manner in which these pages of history might be received, caused him to anticipate his earlier designs. The “Mémoires” appeared just before their writer disappeared from the scene, nor was he wholly satisfied with the result. The doings of the restored Bourbons had already ceased to be of any great importance to a changing world.

Throughout his *apologia* gave a curious impression: that his whole diplomatic career had been deliberately modeled on lines suitable for biography. There were many strange reticences, some of them concerning most important happenings in which he had played a part. One of these omissions is especially to be deplored at the present time: his introspections

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

contain no reference to the events that led to the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine.

When Monroe in his Message warned the European Powers against attempting to "oppress or control" the destinies of any of the free nations of either American continent, this hint was directly aimed at the intervention of France and the Holy Alliance in Spanish affairs. It associated the policy of the United States with that of Great Britain in opposition to the plans of Chateaubriand (then Minister of Foreign Affairs), who aimed to extend the scope of Royalist adventure by establishing a group of Bourbon principalities in South America. To the tortuous diplomacy of this histrionic statesman we therefore owe the most sonorous and popular article of our great national creed.

Although but little read or appreciated by the present generation, even in France, Chateaubriand was one of the most admired writers of his day. Mankind, like architecture and painting, has its "styles," and the period of the Bourbon Restoration chose him for its model. The leader of a romantic movement that brought about a revolution in literature, he was by birth and tradition a reactionary in politics. To be born in Brittany is to inherit the beliefs, prejudices, and inhibitions of another century, and Chateaubriand came of a family of *la Bretagne bretonnante*. The Château of Combourg, where he first saw the light, stands between Dinan and Saint-



FRANÇOIS-RENÉ DE CHATEAUBRIAND

CHATEAUBRIAND

Malo. "I passed my youth," he writes, "a lonely companion of the winds and tides. These were my earliest inspirations." On the rocky shores that look out toward Ushant, "the graveyard of ships," he wrote his boyish verses till the French Revolution forced him into the ranks of the Royalist army.

After the outcome of the events of 1789 had exiled Chateaubriand from France, he returned to Combourg, and, gazing on the ocean horizons that had charmed his boyhood, felt their distant imperative call. In a small packet boat, partly laden with French wines, he left Saint-Malo for America in the early spring of 1791. In later years Chateaubriand, the publicist, attempted to give to these boyish adventures a serious end which it is difficult to reconcile with the circumstances of his departure. In letters to M. de Malesherbes he even hints at vast designs "to explore the shores of Hudson Bay," and to wrest from British voyagers the honor of forcing the Northwest Passage! His landing near the Virginia Capes is best told in his own language:

We passed through a little wood of Virginia cedars whose perfume filled the air. I saw on every side mocking-birds and cardinals whose songs and plumage announced a new, different climate from our own. Herds of cattle were peacefully grazing behind wooden fences along which ran agile squirrels, gray and black. Negro workmen were sawing wood, and cultivating the plantation of tobacco. At a house which resembled both an English farm and a pioneer dwelling, the door was

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

opened to us by a little negress, some fourteen or fifteen years of age, of a rare and extraordinary type of beauty.

It was perhaps fortunate for the susceptible traveler that he embarked almost immediately for the capital at Philadelphia. Here the poet gave place once more to the publicist; the observer with a mission.

To a man like myself, newly landed in the United States (filled, moreover, with the classical enthusiasms of a Cato seeking everywhere the stern customs of the early Roman Republic), the spectacle afforded by the capital; the elegance of the costumes; the luxury of the equipages; the frivolous conversation heard on all sides; the inequality of fortunes, besides the open immorality of the gambling houses and public dance halls, came as a disillusion. Philadelphia was an English city. There was nothing apparent there to differentiate a republic from a monarchy.

An interview with Washington happily restored some of his classical illusions:

A small house in the English style, wholly like its neighbor, was the Palace of the American President. Not a sentinel; not even a single lackey. The door was opened by a young maidservant who bid me "walk in," and to await the General in a little ante-room. In a few moments Washington entered, a tall man with an air cold and formal rather than noble; very like his portraits. I presented my letter in silence, and he opened and read it. "Ah, you come from Colonel Armand!" He spoke thus of the Marquis de la Rouairie.

The great American listened with amazement to his visitor's plans regarding the Northwest Passage.

CHATEAUBRIAND

His incredulity even somewhat ruffled the poet-geographer. With a "Well! Well! young man!" the traveler was bidden to dinner the following day. On the occasion of this gathering the famous key of the Bastile, presented to Washington by Lafayette, was brought forth, and, perhaps in return for his host's doubts regarding his projected discoveries, Chateaubriand in turn grew skeptical concerning this "talisman of Liberty."

New York the poet found "gay and commercial." From Boston he made a pious pilgrimage to the battle-fields of the Revolution, and forgetting his Royalism admired the "mute eloquence" of Lexington, which he compared to Thermopylæ. Embarked upon the Hudson, *La Rivière du Nord*, he heard a fellow voyager sing a popular ballad lamenting the fate of Major André, and approved the generous cult with which that unfortunate Briton's death was even then surrounded. At Albany he proposed to plunge into the wilderness. He seriously considered "studying the languages of the Sioux and Iroquois," and, possibly to facilitate his journeys to the Northwest, "some notions of Esquimault." His first actual contact with the Indian ended in disillusion: "In the midst of the forest I saw a wooden cabin wherein were gathered some twenty savages, men and women, painted like sorcerers, and more than half naked. Their ears were clipped to sharp points, crow feathers adorned their head dress, and brass rings pierced

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

their nostrils. A little Frenchman, powdered and be-ribboned in the style of other days, scraped upon a violin, while to the tune of *Madelon Friquet* these noble Iroquois danced like demons." He spoke of them as "*Ces messieurs sauvages*" and "*Ces dames sauvagesses*." We cannot but suspect some more traveled compatriot hugely enjoying an opportunity to introduce the "tenderfoot" explorer to the customs of the forests.

But Chateaubriand was no ordinary traveler. A voyage by way of Niagara to the Great Lakes, and down the Ohio to the Mississippi, certainly placed him in a position to present savage America to his countrymen, and to dogmatize upon the customs and polity of the Red Man with all the authority of a La Salle or a Montcalm.

But before the triumphant publication of "*Atala*" and the author's return to France a period of stormy exile was to intervene. Chateaubriand learned the news of the abolition of the monarchy and the proclamation of the Republic during the course of his wanderings along the Ohio, and without hesitation set forth to join the Royalist armies of the Prince of Condé. He fought side by side with the officers of his old regiment during the campaign of 1792, and came near dying of sickness and wounds during the ignominious retreat of the Royalist crusaders from Namur. Almost by a miracle he escaped to the Island of Jersey where he was nursed back to life by the family

CHATEAUBRIAND

of a cousin, a penniless refugee like himself. It was hunger and exile that drove the young poet to take up a form of writing which was to lay the foundation of his material prosperity, if not of his literary fame. He soon became one of the most brilliant pamphleteers of the time.

The first of his politico-literary effusions was his "Essai sur les Révolutions." Beginning with a documented account of popular movements in Greece and Rome, and the British Revolution of 1648, he attempted to draw a historical parallel to the recent events in France. This "Outline of History" was a not too reactionary attempt to explain to a bewildered world the causes and results of recent stupendous changes. It came at an opportune time and achieved immediate success. Exploiting this popularity he returned to France, where even the Republican press, veering toward the Brumaire, had acclaimed his talents. With the profits of the "Essai" he revived a famous old literary review, "Le Mercure de France." The publication of his American novel "Atala" soon followed, and his long reign as the arbiter of French letters began.

Chateaubriand was the founder of the "Romantic School," that tearful, self-analyzing revolt of "emotion against thought" that characterized the whole period of the Restoration. It was the day of poetic gloom, of a taste in art that placed Salvator Rosa above Michelangelo; and of the "Christian Re-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

vival." Young France admired — admired greatly — Lord Byron's travels and *amours*. Chateaubriand aspired to be an American "Childe Harold" — or perhaps a literary Christopher Columbus. The strange version of America that he presented to his readers long remained (with Doré's illustrations) the one "authentic" source concerning the physical characteristics of that continent and the strange beings inhabiting its "plains and forests." A sample from "Atala" will go far to explain the curious picture of this country long current abroad:

It is the Nile of the Prairies [he writes of the Mississippi]. While the great central current carries with it to the sea the corpses of pines and oaks, lateral eddies near the banks bear along little floating islands of water-lilies and aquatic plants with waving pennants of yellow stamen. Green serpents, blue herons, rose-tinted flamingoes, young crocodiles, even, embark on these flower-boats which set their golden sails and depart on their dreamy voyage.

Against this background of tropical splendors, the poet-traveler staged a drama of "American" life. The love of the noble René (the author in transparent disguise) for the lovely Indian convert "Atala"; the wise appreciations of the blind old Sachem Chactas concerning the effete customs of Europe; the political and religious philosophizing of the hermit "Father Aubry" (an orthodox admirer of the Bourbons) were all eminently suited to the taste of the time. "Atala," and the later Leatherstocking tales which Chateau-

CHATEAUBRIAND

briand made fashionable, were the medium through which the untraveled European of the early nineteenth century viewed the people and customs of the United States. Beside these "noble redskins" of the forest the sordid traders of Boston and New York played but a sorry figure. Incorrigibly a pamphleteer, Chateaubriand kept alive the national regret for the loss of the great Canadian Empire.

II

ALTHOUGH for a short time he served Napoleon as a Secretary of Legation at Rome, it was not until the return of the Bourbons in 1814 that Chateaubriand began the career as a statesman which had always been the object of his secret ambitions. His pamphlet "*Napoléon et les Bourbons*" (a brilliant piece of what to-day would be called propaganda) had placed Louis XVIII and the restored dynasty under a deep obligation. While acting as Louis's Ambassador at the Court of Saint James's, the first real opportunity occurred (in 1822) to display his talents as a "world statesman."

The international Congress of Verona, not unlike similar conferences held a century later, was principally justified by the necessity of clearing up questions and differences raised at previous reunions of the Allies. Chateaubriand was chosen by Louis XVIII as his representative at Verona in the hope that his "liberal principles" would counterbalance the

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

vagaries of the mystical ultra-Royalist Montmorency, who headed the French delegation.

At first his appointment seemed justified. As the Premier Villèle had foreseen, the persuasions of Alexander soon entangled Montmorency in a network of statements favorable to the Tsar's desire for an intervention in Spain, where the Constitution of 1812 had been forced upon the ignoble King Ferdinand by the Liberal "revolutionaries." An expeditionary force composed of contingents furnished by all the Allies was the only solution, the Tsar-Idealist insisted, for this "European matter." When Chateaubriand replaced Montmorency (relegated to well-earned obscurity with the title of Duke), both as Minister of Foreign Affairs and as the principal French delegate at the Congress of Verona, the Tsar soon made him a convert to his "Sublime Idea." His pleasure in at last filling a post worthy of his talents and the services he had rendered the House of Bourbon was made childishly apparent. To figure at last among the conspicuous group of rulers and statesmen who, passing from conference to conference, formed the policies of Europe, appealed to Chateaubriand's histrionic conception of his own importance. With all the enthusiasm of a dramatist he began the preparation of an international "situation" in which he should inevitably become the principal figure.

The attentions of Alexander, a dangerous charmer, ended in completely fascinating the poet-diplomatist.

CHATEAUBRIAND

In spite of his explicit instructions, he now saw the "necessity" of a war between France and Spain. "The Tsar understood us," he writes in the tiresome plural number which he adopted for his account of these events in the "Congrès de Vérone," "and we immediately understood the Tsar." Even Metternich, another statesman who always seems to have negotiated with an eye to the composition of his memoirs, failed to advance such a pretension!

In one respect, however, Chateaubriand avoided the errors of Montmorency. His instructions directed him to "preserve for France an absolute liberty of action." He insisted upon the right of the chief of the House of Bourbon to reap the facile laurels which he believed would accrue from an expedition to restore the absolute power of Ferdinand VII. All his efforts were now turned toward persuading Louis and the cautious Prime Minister, Villèle, that Spain was no longer the united country whose patriotic resistance had defeated the best Marshals of Napoleon. A recent journey (resulting in an admired romance, "*Le Dernier des Abencerrages*") had made him an authority concerning that country! Again he was "the man who had been there," and his supposed knowledge of Spanish conditions carried the day.

King Louis finally allowed himself to be convinced. On January 28, 1823, a Speech from the Throne declared that an army of one hundred thousand men led by a prince of the Royal house would maintain the

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

rights of the Spanish grandson of Henry IV, threatened by Republicans and the revolutionary "Sects." It was a military expedition wherein the nobles of the Old Régime would fight side by side with the flower of Napoleon's officers. Chateaubriand hastened to confide to his "Mémoires" that he alone was responsible for this happy turn of affairs: "The Spanish war is our own doing. We do not hesitate to affirm that our reputation as a statesman will be made by this event."

The event thus hopefully alluded to, while attaining its immediate end, was to have an outcome far different from that anticipated by the poet-minister. The responsibility so lightly claimed was to end in his own undoing. As the famous "Mémoires" reveal, the Spanish war was but part of a grandiose scheme which Chateaubriand's romantic imagination had devised in order to raise France once more to her old position as the first military Power of the Continent. He dreamed that this Royalist crusade might even strike a fatal blow at Republicanism across the sea. In South America, where the Spanish colonies were successfully maintaining the cause of their independence, the power of the Bourbons, restored by Chateaubriand, was to hold back the hand of time. At the head of a confederation of American kingdoms and principalities he dreamed of placing the younger sons of this Royal house, who might be unprovided with European thrones. Thus at one stroke he believed that the Republican danger might be conjured and,

CHATEAUBRIAND

at the same time, history would see in himself the Warwick of a whole new world.

Nor was this plan so wholly visionary as may well appear at the present time. A strong monarchical movement existed in South America. The republican form of government was still an exotic in the southern continent. On May 28, 1822, Chateaubriand had written to Montmorency:

Peru has adopted a monarchical constitution. The policy of Europe should direct all its efforts toward obtaining a similar result in all the colonies which declare their independence. The United States fears the establishment of an Empire in Mexico. If the New World ever becomes entirely Republican, the monarchies of the Old World will perish.

As the learned Señor de Villanueva has shown in his study entitled "*La Monarquía en América*," so strong was this Royalist sentiment that at one time there was even question of restoring to the throne of a confederation of the old provinces one of the native descendants of the murdered Inca, Manco Capac. The monarchical form of government was everywhere supported by the Church, which kept its hold upon the native population in spite of the spread of liberal ideas among the colonists. Venezuela, the first among the colonies to raise the standard of revolt, had for some time hesitated between a republican constitution and a monarchical form of government. "It was only through the influence of the American Consul that a constitution was finally adopted modeled

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

upon that of the United States." It will thus be seen that Châteaubriand's plans (to some extent founded upon the confidential reports of the agents of the French Foreign Office in South America) were not wholly chimerical.

There are moments, however, in the development of great international policies when the results of empirical diplomacy may very closely resemble those obtained by amateur surgery. In his zeal to restore the prestige of the House of Bourbon in Europe and America this diplomatic impresario overlooked several highly essential factors of his problem. The British Cabinet, as he rightly supposed, might condone a policy of intervention in Spain, and even welcome the preservation of a monarchical system in the New World. But Châteaubriand left out of his calculations Great Britain's opposition to the Family Pact. This agreement, which had formerly united the policies of the French and Spanish Bourbons, still had its terrors for British statesmen. He forgot, moreover, that the great mercantile interests of England would never tolerate any radical change in a situation that without cost or effort to themselves was rendering obsolete the old system which retained colonial trade as a Spanish monopoly. Most important of all, Châteaubriand failed to observe events which showed more and more clearly that George Canning, who had recently succeeded Castlereagh in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had decided to make a clean break

CHATEAUBRIAND

with the policy of "concerted" action fostered by the Holy Alliance. Henceforth, he announced, Great Britain "would resume her isolation" and ask only "to revolve in her own orbit." This was a complete abandonment of the Tsar's policy of international solidarity consecrated by a Holy League.

Alexander's actions now clearly showed that his League of Peace was largely dedicated to what Canning characterized as a "policy of meddling." The interior affairs of neighboring states were obviously the principal object of its congresses and conferences. In a note that immediately preceded the march of the Bourbon armies across the Bidassoa, Canning made an eloquent rejoinder to the elegantly phrased arguments of Chateaubriand concerning that Royalist crusade: "Negotiate at least before you invade," he implored. "Leave the Spanish revolution to burn itself out within its own crater. You have nothing to apprehend from the eruption unless you open a channel for the lava through the Pyrenees."

But Chateaubriand, now urged on by the whole pack of the ultra-Royalist press in triumphant cry against Liberalism, was not to be moved from the line of conduct which he had adopted. Spanish intervention had become an issue of French domestic politics. While the French Minister of Foreign Affairs continued his correspondence with Canning, penning his dispatches in the *grand style* of a minister of the reign of Louis XIV, the new Bourbon armies started

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

on the triumphant march which was to lead them without serious resistance to the walls of Cadiz. Here the Spanish monarch was released from his imprisonment at the hands of his own insurgent "regency." Ferdinand, restored to power, quickly justified every doubt regarding his brutal incapacity and unfitness to reign.

Canning's chief anxiety, however, was not mainly concerned with the fate of the Spanish Republicans. He knew that Chateaubriand was already maturing his plans with respect to America and the extension of Bourbon influence overseas. On March 31st, just before the Spanish invasion, he had directed the British Ambassador in Paris to inform the French Foreign Office that, while England had no intention of appropriating for herself any part of Ferdinand's former possessions, she "confidently expected" that France, whatever the results of the intervention might be, "would show an equal spirit of self-denial." Stripped of its diplomatic form, the British note was an ultimatum which rendered Chateaubriand's cherished plan hazardous if not impossible. The Armada of the Holy Alliance, which he had dreamed might cross the Atlantic to impose the principles of Bourbon legitimacy upon the revolted colonies, was in no position to oppose the navies of Great Britain. It was, moreover, apparent that in this attitude the British Cabinet would soon be able to count upon the coöperation of the United States.

CHATEAUBRIAND

III

CHATEAUBRIAND's plans for an American intervention were to have far-reaching results. On August 16th, Richard Rush, the Minister of the United States at the Court of Saint James's, called at the British Foreign Office. "Transiently," as he observes, he asked Canning whether he was "justified in supposing" that the latter's note of March 31st to Chateaubriand was not "distinct in its import." Was he right in believing that England would not remain passive "in case France should attempt to control South American destinies"? Or, as concerned the colonies, "attempt to bring them under her dominion either by conquest or by cession from Spain"? In this informal conversation, which nevertheless foreshadowed even the language subsequently used in the Monroe Message, Rush expressed his hearty personal approval of the course of British policy. This he knew to be in accord with the views of the Cabinet at Washington.

Canning's prompt rejoinder was to throw the astute but cautious American Envoy into a state of perplexity, which is reflected with amusing sincerity in his memoirs. "What," asked the British Foreign Minister, "did Mr. Rush think his Government would say to going hand in hand in such a policy?" Here, indeed, was a question for the cautious Mr. Rush! How would the fraternal gesture proposed react upon public opinion in the United States? The

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

"whole subject," he wrote, "is novel and open to views on which I have deliberated anxiously." On the one hand, he realized that the United States had already gone much further in the matter than Great Britain. They had recognized "in the most formal manner" the more important insurgent Governments. On the other hand, he was equally convinced of "the danger of pledging my Government to any measure of foreign policy which might now or hereafter implicate it in the federated system of Europe." The latter danger was but the more imminent from the fact that the Tsar and Chateaubriand were already trimming their sails to meet the storm. All the machinery of Alexander's Holy League was to be put in motion in order to give to their policy a tone of disinterested international action. A congress in Europe or "some other concert and consultation specifically on the affairs of South America," Mr. Rush reported, was openly rumored among the European chancelleries. Nor were the American Minister's perplexities lessened by Mr. Canning's logical statement that only "the coöperation of the United States with England through my instrumentality would ward off altogether the meditated jurisdiction of the European Powers in the New World." His anxiety was to continue through many weeks. In Washington the Monroe Doctrine was being slowly forged out in a series of stormy sessions of the Cabinet. As Jefferson saw and reported to the President, "Its consequence

CHATEAUBRIAND

is not her [Britain's] war, but ours. Its object is to introduce and establish the American System, of keeping out of our land all foreign Powers — of never permitting those of Europe to intermeddle with the affairs of our nations."

Finally, to Mr. Rush, anxiously awaiting in London the result of these debates, came the full text of Monroe's Message to Congress. By this time the British Foreign Minister, alarmed by the progress of French intervention, had addressed himself to Chateaubriand in the terms of an ultimatum concerning the South American provinces. The fantastic scheme for setting up Bourbon principalities in South America had received its deathblow. Monroe's Message to Congress, laying down in broad language the policy maintained during the long negotiation between Rush and Canning, was welcomed in the British Parliament "not only with satisfaction, but with enthusiasm." The great Liberal leader Mr. Brougham announced: "The question with regard to Spanish America is now, I believe, disposed of, or nearly so; for an event has recently happened than which none has ever dispensed greater joy, exultation, and gratitude over all the free men of Europe."

The abrupt dismissal of Chateaubriand from his post as Minister of Foreign Affairs followed closely upon the events just narrated. The return of the Duke of Angoulême from Spain, triumphant but wholly disgusted with his Royal cousin, had been ac-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

accompanied by rejoicings in Paris that seemed to justify the poet-minister in his belief that "his war" had "restored to the Bourbon arms their former strength and splendor." How closely he believed the continuance of this state of affairs to be bound up with his policy of a further extension of Bourbon power in South America may be seen by referring to the garrulous appendix of his "Congrès de Vérone."

This policy, however, as he himself realized, had been rendered impossible through Canning's defection from the European System. To the Tsar he turned for the comfort and approbation which was denied him at home. Alexander considered him a victim of the enemies of his "Sublime Idea." Decorations and the ribbons of the highest Russian orders were showered on all Chateaubriand's friends who had supported the cause of the Holy Alliance and international action. Soon the cautious Prime Minister, Villèle, was horrified to unearth a secret and personal negotiation between the French and Russian Foreign Offices, hinting at a new intervention. Foiled in his plans regarding South America, Chateaubriand proposed to employ the French army, with Russian support, to readjust the Rhine frontier. But now even the Royalist majority in the Chamber withheld its approval. On a vote of confidence the overimaginative Foreign Minister was retired to private life.

From then on Chateaubriand passed his time in composing the famous "Mémoires d'Outre Tombe"

CHATEAUBRIAND

which he addressed to future generations. All the logic of which he was capable was enlisted to inform posterity of the opportunities he had offered France in vain. History was filtered and doctored to show that at a critical moment when the whole future glory of the Bourbons hung upon their acquiescence in his policies, the King's Ministers had failed him. Villèle had ruined his schemes. His great design for a Bourbon empire in South America, which would compensate France for the loss of Canada, had been thrust aside. All this might be forgiven. But, as we may read between the lines, the unpardonable sin lay in Villèle's conduct toward Chateaubriand himself. A successor had risen to Richelieu and Colbert and the doors of the Ministry had been slammed in his face. The moment, described at length in his "Mémoires," when he had tossed his belongings "into half a dozen waiting hackney coaches" and quitted the quarters of the Foreign Minister "within an hour," was, he believed, a turning-point in the history of two continents. With these comforting reflections Chateaubriand turned his back upon the episode of the "American colonies." For the Monroe Doctrine — to-day the outstanding result of this strange diplomatic adventure — there is no word of comment. Perhaps the author of "Atala" could not bring himself to treat seriously the foreign relations of a country which his own pen had brought to the polite attention of Continental Europe.

X

JAMES MONROE: A CENTENARY PORTRAIT (1823-1923)

I

A CENTURY after President Monroe's Seventh Annual Message was delivered to Congress, it still resumes — sometimes with disconcerting completeness — the attitude which the majority of his countrymen prefer to adopt toward their world neighbors. One hundred years of exuberant national expansion have but proved its almost infallible applicability to an ever-widening circle of external contacts. It is even to be feared that his views concerning "the condition of the civilized world and its bearing on us" have unwittingly acquired the mysterious force of dogma rather than of reasonable doctrine. Yet Monroe — the man himself — has become to-day a curiously misunderstood and shadowy figure.

His painted portraits reveal but little besides the fact that he wore his hair short and brushed back in a curiously modern fashion at a time when most statesmen affected a more monumental *coiffure*.

In spite of a mass of "Monroe Papers" there is no satisfactory biography of the fifth President. It is almost as difficult to reconstruct a plausible biography of

JAMES MONROE

the author of the famous Doctrine from his literary remains as to visualize those imposing, incredible creatures of prehistoric times whose petrified footprints are the only proof that they ever walked this earth. His friend, John Quincy Adams, left what is manifestly intended to be a "eulogy," rather than a "Life." A slender volume in the "American Statesmen" series has gathered the few pale anecdotes that were current among those who knew him, then plunges into the familiar history of his time. (It contains, however, one precious document by Judge Watson, who pictures him when his face, "strongly marked with the lines of anxiety and care," was turned toward the Last Sunset.) It is tantalizing to know that he planned to write his own record of the events "to which Mr. Monroe was a party" and that modesty and lack of encouragement prevented.

This in no measure implies that he was a neutral figure, or even self-effaced. He was "six feet high, perhaps rather more, broad and square-shouldered and raw-boned." His mouth "was rather large and his forehead broad," "a man of fine physique and capable of great endurance." A whole theory concerning the "authorship" of the Doctrine has been based on his "timidity," yet we know that to furnish his idol Jefferson with new arguments regarding the Northwest Territory he made two journeys into that unknown wilderness, and (while Secretary of State) when Washington was threatened during the War

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

of 1812 "he did not undress himself for ten days and was in the saddle most of the time."

Monroe was inarticulate rather than negative. His "conversational powers were not of a high order." At a time when statesmen prided themselves on a "copper-plate hand," his handwriting was almost illegible. To the taste of his time "he lacked versatility" and "the general culture requisite for shining in the social circle." He was, in short, a President of the type of McKinley or Harding, rather than a Roosevelt or a Wilson. It was the type the makers of the Constitution had in view.

Had there been no Jefferson it is possible there would have been no Monroe. His uncle, Judge Jones (whose influence was not always fortunate), advised him early "to cultivate the friendship" of the great Virginian. "While you continue to deserve his esteem," he wrote, "he will not withdraw his countenance." Young Monroe had every inclination to follow this course. Yet he was in no sense a hanger-on or even an inspired understudy. He had a "genius for friendship," and, as Bancroft says, "Every one was glad to call him friend." This was "the key to his early advancement," but nowhere in his career is there a trace of subserviency or, as has been inferred, of overdependence on his subordinates.

Monroe was the last of the great line of Revolutionary Presidents. Besides himself only the first and

JAMES MONROE

greatest of these had seen military service. At a time when it required something besides physical courage for a patriot with position and property to become a soldier, Monroe was among the first to volunteer (serving as a Lieutenant in the Third Virginia Regiment). That he never rose to high rank was due to reasons in no way discreditable to his capacity. He was wounded at the battle of Trenton, at the same time as Colonel William Washington, and afterwards served with the rank of Major on the staff of that picturesque republican grandee — provisions-dealer and pretender to high estate — Lord Stirling. At the battles of the Brandywine, Germantown, and Monmouth, he played a distinguished part. His wounds, his promotion to staff duty, and a more than unusual share of hard luck were the honorable reasons that kept him from further advancement. To what an extent military glory and promotion could become a passion among the Continental officers is shown by the letters of Lee and Greene — and the terrible example of Arnold. To Lord Stirling, Monroe wrote in 1782: "Chagrined with my disappointment in not obtaining the rank and command I sought, chagrined with some disappointments in a private line, I retired from society with almost a determination never to return to it again."

Even in the days of his highest political success he regretted the lost opportunity for a military reputation, and the "zeal" so highly commended by his

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

General was to lead at a later period (1814) to the curious spectacle of a Secretary of State in a top hat and frock coat carrying dispatches under fire as one of the President's "mounted Cabinet" at the battle of Bladensburg, and even adding to the confusion of that inglorious day by "changing the order of battle" without the knowledge of General Winder who commanded the "motley mass" of the American forces.¹

Monroe's early experience of diplomacy was almost as unfortunate as his failure to win a General's stars. In spite of his eremitical forebodings his talents and popularity secured him early political recognition in his own State. He was elected a member of the Continental Congress during three sessions, and was sent as a delegate to the Virginia Constitutional Convention (1788). When, in 1794, Washington was faced with the problem of finding a "Gallican" to represent his country as Minister to France, he was serving a first term as Senator. The President's choice was sufficiently curious to create much comment. Monroe was a political follower of Jefferson, and a determined opponent of the Administration. Like most of the land-owning Southern gentry of his class, he was an ardent sympathizer with France. This attitude was not so much the outcome of love for the principles of the revolutionists as from an enduring dislike for their British opponents. The lack among their own ranks of a man even mildly acceptable to the mem-

¹ Gilman.

JAMES MONROE

bers of the French Convention forced Monroe on the Federalists after several more suitable men had refused. His wide popularity with both parties in Congress seemed to indicate that he might have an equal personal success abroad. Moreover, the detested "Royalist," Gouverneur Morris, had made Federalism suspicious to the Jacobins. The circumstances of his appointment must be borne in mind in judging of Monroe's subsequent behavior.

Bound by the terms of a long series of "instructions" that show the distrust in which he was held by the Administration, Monroe set sail for France in June. He arrived just after the failure of Robespierre's bloody experiment in government and the rise to power of a more moderate party. France, at the time, was diplomatically shunned and isolated. She had disgraced Liberty in much the same fashion as has the Bolshevik régime of the present day. Besides Monroe, a Minister from Geneva was the only person sent to cultivate the amenities of foreign intercourse with the Parisians. The mild liberalism of Switzerland was shocked — and her Envoy about to leave. Monroe was obliged to address himself to the President of the Convention in order to learn how to approach that terrible body. A special decree was necessary to introduce the American Minister.

Monroe's speech on this occasion created an instant furor. It was translated and published broadcast. His popularity with the members of the Convention

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

was, however, considered in America in another light. Carried away by characteristic zeal and his own warm-hearted admiration for the French people, Monroe had transgressed nearly all the principal terms of his famous "instructions." *Persona grata*, in the fullest diplomatic sense, he was disavowed at home. The Convention voted that "the flags of the United States of America and of France shall be joined and displayed in the halls of the Convention as a sign of the union and eternal fraternity of the two people." In open session the President of the Convention gave "Citizen" Monroe the "accolade" or "fraternal embrace." A few days later (at the apotheosis of the Republican philosopher Rousseau) the Stars and Stripes, carried by Monroe's nephew, preceded the American delegation in a procession along the streets where the tumbrils of the Terror had carried their victims to the foot of the guillotine but a few weeks before.

At home, Monroe became the victim of this indiscreet popularity. He soon received from Randolph, the Secretary of State, a long admonition written in all the disagreeable "frankness of friendship." His reception, he was told, should "have taken place in private." His letter of credence containing "the degree of profession the Government was desirous of making" had been "exceeded." The Administration had been "exposed to the rancorous criticisms of the Governments at war with France." His "private

JAMES MONROE

affections and opinions" had been consulted rather than the public interest. Finally, "the extreme glow" of his address had placed the Government in "an awkward dilemma": the latter charge was the climax of this crescendo of fault-finding; the French Revolution had become a football of American domestic politics.

It is not difficult to understand Federalist objections to many of "Citizen" Monroe's activities. He stopped his appalling speeches only to become engaged in the interest of the now detested Thomas Paine, the author of "Common Sense," who had good reason to fear that his troubles with the Convention might have a tragic ending. Frankly disgusted with American "democracy," he had shaken off the dust of his native land "forever." In Paris he was at first treated as a "foreign benefactor of the species" and duly elected a member of the French legislature. But he soon fell out with the majority, and suddenly recalled his American nationality when the shadow of the guillotine fell across the door of his cell. Monroe secured his freedom, and lodged the ruffled and disillusioned "Red" in the American Legation. Here he quickly recovered courage to enter upon a correspondence vilifying Washington and all his countrymen who had shown indifference to his "case."

Monroe also had upon his hands a quarrel with the American Minister in London, John Jay. This Fed-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

eralist "epitome of abstract propriety" was the last person to allow Monroe to dictate the course of policy which he should pursue. He disliked the incident of the "fraternal kiss" and all of Monroe's other radicalisms. The version of the British treaty that was soon current in Paris put an end to the fine flare of enthusiasm which had accompanied Monroe's arrival. A letter from the Committee of Public Safety informed him with Republican frankness of the opinion in which "Citizen" Jay was held by the Convention. Copies of the latter's alleged agreement "of alliance and commerce" were forthwith demanded. There was even a hint that "between two free peoples the dissimulation that belongs to courts" should be dispensed with.

Monroe could bear any trial better than unpopularity. He applied to Jay for a copy of the unratified document and — not unnaturally — met with a refusal. In his present temper, this amounted to "an equivocation." He wrote for comfort to his fellow party-men in America. "It is the most shameful transaction I have ever known," he "confided" to Judge Jones. His letter was made to serve the purpose of a campaign document by Jefferson, and he lost the favor of Washington.

In February, 1796, matters came to a head. The French Government informed Monroe of their intention of sending a "Special Envoy" to the United States "to remonstrate concerning the terms of the

JAMES MONROE

British treaty." It required all the remaining credit of the unfortunate American Minister to oppose a course of events that could only have ended in war. While thus engaged he was abruptly notified of his recall.

The sequel to Monroe's first unfortunate diplomatic mission was the least edifying part of the whole incident. His determination to be "vindicated" was exteriorized in a volume that is one of the curiosities of polemical literature. In some five hundred closely written pages the American public was invited to peruse "A View of the Conduct of the Executive in the Foreign Affairs of the United States as connected with the Mission of the French Republic during the years 1794-96." Under fourteen heads — in the pseudo-theological fashion of the day — he "summarized" his grievances, and demolished the insinuations of the Federal "Junius," "Pater Patriæ," "Cincinnatus," and other anonymous champions who had ventured to criticize his conduct in France.

II

THE election of Jefferson, his patron and pattern, to the Presidency soon offered Monroe another opportunity to prove his diplomatic talents. He was sent to France this time on a Special Mission. But the Republic which had welcomed "Citizen" Monroe had given place to the Empire. This second visit was to lay the foundations of a policy of territorial expansion

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

which formed the preface to his own later "doctrine" of triumphant Americanism.

The Louisiana Purchase was the final liquidation of a great Napoleonic dream to take the place of the Canadian domain (so lightly bartered for the "Sugar Islands" by the inept diplomacy of Louis XV). The Emperor had hoped to reunite to France the watershed of the Mississippi. Frenchmen had explored and claimed this great "Heart of the Continent" for the Bourbons. The white population were still preponderatingly French. But in the events that led to the rupture of the Peace of Amiens, the Emperor saw the deathblow of the "American Empire." The Treaty of San Ildefonso, by which Spain had been forced to transfer Louisiana to France, lost all significance in the face of a hostile British sea-power.

Almost at the same time that Napoleon abandoned his plans of invading America, Jefferson's "non-expansionist" policy was attacked in Congress. The Representatives of the Southern and Western States, whose commerce was threatened by the closing of the *entrepôt* at New Orleans, were not in accord with the uninspiring geographical formula of a President who considered the Mississippi as "the natural western boundary" of the United States. Congress appropriated two million dollars to secure an "outlet" at the mouth of the great river. The President selected Monroe to act with R. R. Livingston (the American

JAMES MONROE

Minister in Paris) in an attempt to Americanize the Father of Waters.

The unlucky diplomatist learned on his arrival that the transfer of the entire territory had been offered by Napoleon and accepted in principle by his colleague while he was at sea. Only sordid details of price remained to be threshed out. The whole affair seemed at first robbed of the glory which it had promised. But Monroe found the task of reconciling the rapacity of the French negotiators to the penurious views of Congress made exceptionally difficult by the Emperor's policy of paying the latter according to the price obtained.

The rapidly developing crisis in the relations between France and Great Britain enabled Monroe to exercise diplomatic pressure at a critical moment. Napoleon was anxious to be rid of Louisiana, and the reluctance of American legislators to pay millions of dollars for an empty territory, however "vast and significant," was met by further impatient concessions. Even when the preliminary treaty was signed, one at least of the negotiators was doubtful of the value of their bargain. Livingston wrote apologetically to Madison that part of the price might be recovered by "the sale of the territory west of the Mississippi to some Power in Europe whose vicinity we should not fear."

America was destined never to see Napoleon. Instead an intimate record of the time shows the mod-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

ern Cæsar seated in a warm bath, dictating amid clouds of soapy steam the final measures that brought to an end the greatest colonial venture of France. In this grotesque fashion was written the last chapter of the heroic *épopée* of daring and discovery blazoned with the names of Champlain, La Salle, and Père Marquette! Monroe, before his departure from Paris, was presented to Bonaparte, who expressed his satisfaction at the result achieved. Never at a loss for a rhetorical gesture, he covered the situation with a famous aphorism: "I have given to England," declared the Master of France, "a maritime rival which will sooner or later humble her pride."

But as a diplomat, Monroe was again to become the victim of his own popularity. The very fact of his success in France disqualified him for the negotiations he was now sent to carry out in Great Britain. In London, he found Pitt's "War Ministry" again in power, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs received him with more than marked coldness. Stories of the American Minister's "French proclivities" had preceded him. The only form of treaty he was able to negotiate was promptly rejected by the President. He had failed to secure any redress for the impressment of American seamen, or indemnity for the "spoliations" to which American commerce had been subjected. Jefferson somewhat ungraciously withheld the entire transaction from Congress.

Monroe's return to America in the autumn of 1807

JAMES MONROE

was again clouded by failure. The jubilant outburst of popular enthusiasm which had followed the announcement of the Louisiana Purchase had by this time subsided. Public opinion was concerned only with the "battle" fought off the Chesapeake Capes in which the American frigate *Chesapeake* was worsted after a "glorious drubbing" by the British ship *Leopard*. Monroe's attempts to meet the views of the British Cabinet had done nothing to recommend him to the existing temper of the American public. Yet in spite of his previous experience (and a long-drawn-out quarrel with the publisher of the famous "View"), he was determined once more to "vindicate" his conduct. This time, he chose the less expensive medium of the Public Printer. In the form of a ten-page letter inserted in the State Papers, he once more defended his reputation as a diplomat. Under the handicap of a situation not to be bettered by these explanations, he entered the contest of 1808 for the Presidency, which resulted in Madison's election. His successful rival's offer (dictated by Jefferson) of the Secretaryship of State brought Monroe three years later into renewed contact with diplomatic affairs — and the complications that resulted in the War of 1812.

III

His earlier, far from fortunate experiences as a diplomat appear in the cautious fashion in which the policies

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

of his Department were carried out by Monroe. But Congress was tired of "half-measures" and American public opinion demanded a "strong attitude" while shrinking from war. The Administration was held responsible for its failure to secure these irreconcilable ends. Madison was hurried into the conflict he had tried to avoid, and Monroe, in a desperate bid to recover the prestige of the Administration, offered a plan for a national conscription as the only possible remedy for the situation. Fortunately, Great Britain was soon engaged in the final bout of her long struggle with Napoleon, and the war became a half-hearted performance on both sides relieved by a dramatic but indecisive series of naval duels in which the Americans were generally victorious.

Madison's amiable policy looked only to a popular victory. His ill-prepared scheme for an invasion of Canada stripped the capital of its defenders and led to the burlesque spectacle of his Administration barely escaping from Washington in the face of a British landing force that raided Washington. He left office covered with half-deserved reproaches. Only the "patched-up" Peace of Ghent in a measure restored public confidence in Monroe's conduct of foreign affairs. But Jefferson's political machine ran smoothly — and the Secretary of State became the new President.

Monroe's majority indeed almost obliterated the Federalist Party, and inaugurated the "Era of Good

JAMES MONROE

Feelings." The war with Great Britain had finally ended on the note struck by Jackson's unexpected victory at New Orleans. Fought after the signing of the Treaty of Ghent, this engagement nevertheless served a purpose in effacing rankling memories (Dolly Madison fleeing from the White House with the Presidential spoons while her dinner, "prepared for the Cabinet and *several military gentlemen*," was eaten by the British officers who subsequently destroyed her home). "Historical" popular prints — such as the allegory of Madame Planton, "the Philadelphia artist," representing "Britannia on her knees to Dame Liberty" — hung in every patriotic parlor. The War of 1812 actually prepared the way for a better understanding with our "favorite enemy."

Monroe's Administration opened with a triumphal tour of the East and South. The Presidential journey, the first since Washington's time, occupied more than three months and a half. Critical newspapers grumbled at the expense and loss of time involved, but the general opinion (voiced by Waldo) viewed complacently "the President of the United States thronged by an assemblage of happy freemen acknowledging their gratitude to the only 'legitimate' ruler of a great nation." A rediscovered superiority to trans-Atlantic civilization was to characterize the "Golden Age" covered by Monroe's two Administrations. "There is everything in America's favor," wrote young Mr. Emerson in his "Concord Journals,"

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

“to one who puts faith in the Westward progress of the Car of Empire.”

In the same spirit of indulgent pride good Americans were prepared to view their new capital of Washington. At the beginning of Monroe's Administration, it was but the ground plan of a city. Such public buildings surviving the futile bonfire of Ross's troops had been spared chiefly on account of their insignificance. The “magnificent distances” of L'Enfant's grandiose scheme could scarcely be traced among the swamps and woodland of the Potomac; good shooting was to be enjoyed within gunshot of the Capitol. Mr. John Quincy Adams, on arriving from quiet Quincy to take up his duties as Secretary of State, was horrified one morning to find that his servant had “killed a brown snake nearly three feet long at the bottom of the stairs.” Mr. Mills — also from Massachusetts — described the place of his legislative labors as “a miserable desert . . . a scene of desolation and horror.” The streets in winter were “quagmires of mud” and in summer “deep-rutted wastes, iron hard, wherein pigs and stray draft animals rolled in the dust.” Such a residence offered obstacles to the maintenance of official etiquette.

Yet the new President's “ambition to place the foreign Ministers . . . much upon the same footing as the American Ministers were placed at the European Courts” met with general approval.¹ Although they

¹ J. Q. Adams.

JAMES MONROE

had "heretofore visited the Presidents familiarly," and the latter had called to take tea at their houses "as among individuals," Monroe thought such a neglect of formality "improper." He gave notice to the Diplomatic Corps that "if they wished for personal audiences, he would always grant them and receive them in form." He intimated hopefully that there would be "weekly evening parties" at the White House, and that a regular time would be fixed to receive official visitors "as soon as he had a Secretary."

The Diplomatic Corps seem to have viewed the changes of protocol with equanimity. If slightly ridiculous, the new state of things in a measure flattered their own sense of dignity. The oldest member of this body was the Portuguese Minister, the Abbé (or Chevalier) de Correa. His case is noted by Mr. Adams as "peculiarly embarrassing" from the fact that "his intimacy with Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison was great and had existed before his appointment as Minister." He had also "been in considerable intimacy with Mr. Monroe," who was "at a loss how to discriminate." He was informed that until "a book should be kept" for Presidential visitors, he might call and "a card would answer for the present." Mr. Adams notes that at the Presidential audiences Mr. Monroe received the Ministers standing and in "half-military dress" (*sic*) or in "a full suit of black." The Abbé Correa was the only one who ventured

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

“starting topics,” for which, the Secretary of State adds, “he has a peculiar talent.” It is not surprising to learn that “these interviews were merely formal and dull.”

But if the representatives of the “friendly” foreign Courts represented in Washington were held to a somewhat provincially minded formality of conduct, the relations between the President and his own official household were easily democratic. The principal members of Monroe’s Cabinet generally acted as a well-knit and harmonious group. The President (as well liked by his co-laborers as by the public) was preëminent both in point of years and experience. Adams, the Secretary of State, who had just reached his fiftieth year (although bred in the heresies of Federalism), was considered by his colleagues an oracle concerning foreign affairs. The Attorney-General, Wirt, an able lawyer of forty-five, was influential as the President’s most intimate friend. The politician, Crawford, the Secretary of the Treasury (who derived his position from a popularity not wholly free from demagoguery), was forty-five. The Secretary of War, Calhoun, a Southern Irish-Presbyterian, was a dour youngster of thirty-five. All these men were retained in the Cabinet during Monroe’s two terms of office and remained on intimate and friendly terms with the head of the Administration until his death. Monroe also had at his elbow the “elder statesmen” of the party. The “Sages” of Monticello and Mont-

JAMES MONROE

pelier were within easy reach by post-riders sent from Washington. There is reason to believe that much of the President's "wavering" (a quality so disturbing to the decisive Mr. Adams) was due to his determination to consult Jefferson and Madison on all important questions. The influence of this "Presidential Trinity" was observed by the more acute members of the Diplomatic Corps.

Outside the Cabinet group but two outstanding national personalities remained to be reckoned with. General Jackson, the hero of New Orleans, in the intervals of an impetuous military career, was always ready with advice — and generally with his support. Henry Clay — the first important statesman and idol of the West — represented the only serious opposition which the foreign policies of the Administration had to fear. This concentration of the political talent of the "Era of Good Feelings" in the hands of its natural leader was later to be of immense advantage in formulating the Monroe Doctrine.

When concerned with foreign affairs, the discussions at the meetings of the Cabinet generally brought forth "a variety of viewpoints." These are set down at length in Adams's "Memoirs." The tone of his informal minutes shows the members of the Cabinet generally acting in conformity with the character assigned them by the diarist. Wirt seldom interfered except on points of law. Crawford, with his gaze ever fixed upon the Presidency, was chiefly concerned

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

with "popular opinion" and the "views of Congress." Calhoun, moralizing and pessimistic, saw in our foreign policy every danger of "entanglement" that a local and untraveled imagination could evoke. Adams, whose tireless industry had placed every detail of foreign business at his fingers' ends, enjoyed the advantage of being the only person thoroughly informed about the matters under debate. A certain superior attitude toward the slower apprehension of his less-informed colleagues and a not unnatural resentment on their part sometimes resulted. Monroe, the presiding force, always kept his subordinate's impatience within bounds. "His candor and good humor," wrote Adams, "never fail." Frequently after their stormiest meetings the Cabinet dined together at the President's table. Their official relations were neither the stiff deliberations of Madison's "Council" nor the undignified intimacies of Jackson's "Kitchen Cabinet." Monroe possessed to a marked degree the art of managing men.

IV

THE diplomatic situation which Monroe was soon called upon to meet was of a nature calculated to flatter the new spirit of sturdy nationalism. With the close of the Napoleonic Wars, the United States ceased to be viewed merely as a "carrying nation," to be hectored or cajoled by the contending Great Powers in the interest of their own version of the

JAMES MONROE

duties of "neutrality." The war with Great Britain, if not wholly fortunate in its military outcome, had shown the new Republic capable of standing stiffly in defense of its rights. It had given a "spring" to our credit among the Courts of Europe.¹

Europe's problems of political and economic reconstruction, the aftermath of nearly seventeen years of war, were viewed by the American public with a detachment that somewhat prophetically recalls the present time. The Powers allied by the "System of 1815" (the treaties which were the outcome of the Congress of Vienna and the "Treaty of Alliance") were still united in a general policy by their fears of French Imperialism. The idealistic Tsar of Russia had proposed a closer international union through a "League of Justice, Christian Charity, and Peace." His attempt to apply a "spiritual remedy" under the guise of a "Holy Alliance" was already formulating a policy of international reaction far from reassuring to liberal opinion abroad. But from these European concerns the policy outlined in Washington's "Farewell Address" kept the Administration generally aloof. The representations made from time to time by the foreign diplomatic representatives in Washington were couched in a new tone of deference to American views and prejudices.

Public opinion in the United States was content to leave matters of foreign policy in the hands of the

¹ Harris.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Executive. The Foreign Affairs Committees of Congress rarely sought to exercise a controlling supervision (except when trying to make a party slogan of some issue in which the people might be moved to take a sentimental interest — the fate of the Greek insurgents in their fight with an “infidel Sultan” or the struggle of the South American colonies to obtain their freedom from “monarchical tyranny”).

With Great Britain but one serious question had survived the settlement of Ghent: the return of American “property” — principally refugee negro slaves — carried away by her armies during the final evacuation of the border fortresses. Concerning this matter a mediation had been undertaken by the Tsar of Russia (the gesture suited his international attitude). The struggle between Spain and her colonies concerned Monroe’s Administration only in the form of protests against the privateers armed in American ports to prey upon the “enemies” of the colonists. Neither of these somewhat sordid “wrongs” could give much ground for generous sentimentalism or the “idealism” which then, as now, alone arouses American popular interest in questions overseas. Mr. Daschkov, the Russian Chargé d’Affaires, wrote somewhat plaintively of this indifference to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “They pay no more attention to us and our business than if we were so many Chinamen.”¹

¹ MSS. Russian Foreign Office.

JAMES MONROE

In spite of this apparent apathy, powerful forces were tending to crystallize public opinion with respect to the part the United States might be called upon to play in World Affairs. Monroe and his Cabinet were soon to give definite form to our foreign policy; but this manifesto (which furnished succeeding generations with a written code of rules and principles of external conduct) was imposed upon the Administration by the force of events. It was only by slow stages and with infinite precaution that the Executive was led to its final stand. This well-considered act, rather than a "defiance" to aggression from overseas, was from the beginning a policy of self-protection. It is doubly fortunate that at this eminent crisis in American foreign relations, the Cabinet was largely controlled by the conservative opinion of trained and experienced diplomats. Both Monroe and Adams realized to what extent the policy of their country had already been fixed by tradition. Their long service abroad had shown them how generally this attitude was accepted even by the European Powers. Foreign affairs early became the principal problem facing the administration.

At a Cabinet meeting, held on May 13, 1818, the attitude the United States should adopt toward European intervention in the affairs of South America was discussed "with much diversity of opinion." The question formally presented by Monroe read: "Whether the Ministers of the United States in

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Europe shall be instructed that the United States will not join in any project of interposition between Spain and the South Americans, which should not be to promote the independence of the colonies." In this form the query became academic. The only Power which might conceivably meet the views of the United States on these grounds was Great Britain, and (as Mr. Adams pointed out), "While she would readily acquiesce in the South American independence," she would also "cautiously avoid having the appearance of supporting it." Adams at this time was especially anti-British in his personal views. The policy of ruthless governmental repression with which Castlereagh and Eldon were trying to combat the starving mobs of unemployed soldiers — who but a few months before had been the "Heroic Saviours of Europe" — was especially distasteful. He could not believe that the cause of popular government anywhere would meet with favor in the eyes of the Liverpool Cabinet.

The execution of two English adventurers, Arbuthnot and Ambrister, by the American troops in Florida furnished another "incident" that delayed the return of "good relations" between the only two countries interested in the revolutionary cause in South America. Adams supported General Jackson in spite of newspaper criticism that he had acted hastily, and in opposition to the findings of a court-martial. He took the ground that the presence of

JAMES MONROE

Englishmen among the Seminoles and renegade negroes, against whom the Americans were campaigning, led to but one conclusion: the British cabinet was furnishing support and leadership to these bandits. The incident was not in itself of the first importance, but any coöperation between the two great liberal Powers was further delayed.

Adams's disapproval of Great Britain was carried to the point of personal enmity. He was, on one occasion at least, unpardonably rude to the mild-mannered British Minister, Bagot. To the Spanish Envoy, Onís, who proposed the idea of a Spanish-American alliance, he raged over "English duplicity."

The Administration, moreover, was the object of a courtship by the Powers of the Holy Alliance. Even Metternich suggested an exchange of Chargés. Their object was obviously to estrange the United States from the mother country.

Monroe, however, did not lose faith in the possibility of Anglo-American action. In July, 1818, he abruptly directed Adams to see the British Minister and propose through him an immediate coöperation by the United States and Great Britain to "promote the independence of South America." The Secretary of State was taken aback. "What part of South America?" "All of South America and Mexico and the islands included." Adams found the idea "crude," and, in spite of the fact that the President showed "some impatience of manner," did not hesitate to

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

point out that "Great Britain was not prepared for such a proposition."

Had the means of communication between Washington and London been perfected, the "joint action" desired by the President might have taken more definite form. A dispatch from Mr. Rush (which Adams fails to note in his "Diary") subsequently informed the Department of State that, on July 31st, Lord Castlereagh had made an almost identical proposal to the American Minister. The point of difference was, however, important. Great Britain desired a further "mediation," regarding South America. "The American Government," said Mr. Rush, if they took part at all, "would do so only on the basis of the independence of the colonies."¹

Bagot in Washington was instructed to make the British position clear at the Department of State. His explanations formed a further point of agreement between the President and Castlereagh. When Adams suggested to the British Envoy that "it would be but fair to Spain to put an end to her expectations" by recognizing the principal South American Governments, "Mr. Bagot entirely assented to this opinion." Lord Castlereagh also showed a willingness "to communicate frankly" what was doing by the European Allies in relation to Spain in South America.

In all this preface to the events which more than

¹ Gilman.

JAMES MONROE

three years later led to the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine, the difference in the views of Adams and Monroe becomes apparent. Monroe from the beginning seems to have realized that, in the face of a common policy between Great Britain and the United States, the Allied Powers would find it difficult to carry out their anti-revolutionary programme to crush South American independence. Adams favored a policy less courageous and far more respectful to the plans of European "Concerted Action." "It is our true policy," he maintained, "to let this experiment have its true effect, without attempting to disturb it, which might give offense to the Allies." Without faith in the Tsar's plans of a "Holy League" he was nevertheless anxious to avoid any possible "collisions." Monroe through the force of these objections was led to await the results of the "World Congress" at Aix-la-Chapelle. The Presidential Message of 1818 merely announced that the "United States should adhere to its course in the present state of affairs."

The "Golden Age" of the popular President saw the beginnings of a great national tragedy: the admission of Missouri to the Union, under the terms of a doubtful "Compromise." Slavery, moreover, was a dark factor in our foreign relations. If the Monroe Cabinet had reason to doubt the political idealism of Great Britain in her relations with South America,

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Castlereagh might well retort that the attitude of the United States toward the Slave Trade was hardly in accord with an abstract enthusiasm for Liberty. The President earnestly wished to "gain over" Mr. Wilberforce and his party. The British Cabinet, at the instigation of this great reformer, had proposed very practical measures for the prohibition of a cruel traffic. But the only means of "enforcement" for which the approval of Congress could be obtained fell far short of the "mutual right of search" and other measures of sea police that England wished to put in force to prevent further "black-birding."

Another problem of our foreign relations presented itself in a form especially trying to a man of the President's merciful temperament: this concerned the treatment that should be accorded to the crews of vessels convicted of the popular crime of "illegal privateering." America's principal display of practical sympathy with the cause of the South Americans had tended to take this sordid form. Under the cover of strange flags, and the even more dubious authority of unrecognized revolutionary "states," expeditions were sent out (often with the connivance of Federal officials) to prey upon Spanish commerce. These "letters of marque" were often the subject of nefarious profit on the part of American Agents accredited to the Southern Governments. Pressure was continually brought to bear upon the President to exercise his clemency in favor of seamen sentenced to death

JAMES MONROE

for the meanest forms of piracy by persons who sought to surround the acts of sea-thugs and ruffians with a halo of patriotic heroism. In such a rowdy connection our relations with South America suffered in the eyes of foreigners.

V

ON the evening of February 22, 1821, the Executive Mansion was the scene of a great "Birthnight Ball." The President had determined not to follow the example of his predecessor (whose wife, the lovely emancipated Quakeress Dolly Madison, "saw every one, visited everywhere and allowed no distinctions"). Mr. Adams had been much criticized on account of a "severe series of rules of etiquette which gave general offense" because too many were excluded. The Senators' families, who were "living gypsy fashion" on account of the lack of proper accommodation or were "huddled in boarding-houses," believed that part of the Presidential duties consisted in furnishing "some entertainment." Jefferson's "Rule of Pell-Mell" had been superseded by a return to the "Republican ceremonial" of the Washington régime. "Wine was handed about in wineglasses on large silver salvers by colored waiters dressed in dark livery." "All the lower rooms were well filled, though not uncomfortably so." The President and Mr. Adams were in "plain attire," which offered "a contrast to the splendid costumes and decorations of the

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

foreigners" that was much remarked. Mrs. Monroe, who in Paris had been known as "*la belle Américaine*," wore "superb black velvet; neck and arms bare; her hair in puffs dressed high on the head with white ostrich plumes." The attitude of the Administration toward the Diplomatic Corps had grown definitely more formal.

Another incident of importance in tracing the personal background of the Monroe Doctrine was the presence among other "Europeans" of the "handsome new British Minister." Stratford Canning, the future Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, was the bearer of proposals from his Government which offer a somewhat striking parallel to the problems of the present day. The British Cabinet had determined that the United States should adhere to a definite convention aimed at suppressing the Slave Trade. This involved the creation of an "International Prize Court" and an agreement by the terms of which the vessels of either nation should consent to be "searched by the armed vessels of another." Two mixed Courts of Commissioners had actually been instituted in Europe to try all such captures. Adams, while wholly in sympathy with the ends to be obtained, "rejected this proposal on two grounds; one: a lack of constitutional authority to establish such a court; and the other: a disapproving of the principle of allowing to search."

Moreover, in connection with the alliance, "which regulated the affairs of Europe without ever calling

JAMES MONROE

the United States to their consultations," he made some further pertinent remarks: "It was best," he maintained, "that both parties should continue to do so, for if the United States should become a member of the body, they would now be a power entitled to great influence and in a few years must become a first-rate power in the league." They would bring to it, he feared, "principles not congenial to those of the other members and those principles would lead to discussions tending to discord rather than to harmony."

The interview, in which Stratford Canning urged and "reurged" the advantages of Anglo-American coöperation, ended in a striking exposition of Adams's views respecting the policy of isolation which he continued to favor: "He asked if our principle of rejecting the measures as concerted by the European Allies was so general as to induce a refusal to coöperate with them in any measure. I said No; we had formed no such determination. There might be a concert of measures proposed to which our objections would not apply, and that a free and mutual communication of what might be done on either side would continue to the attainment of the common object."

Anglo-American relations tended to improve, following the slow withdrawal of the British Cabinet from the devious combinations of the Tsar's increasingly reactionary "League of Peace." On the other hand, a collision with the Northern Colossus now seemed imminent on the almost unexplored shores

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

of the North Pacific. The astonishing claims of the "Ukase of 1821" foreshadowed a policy of Russian expansion on the Northwest coast. Only a few traders and trappers cared to follow the "pursuit of commerce, whaling, and fishing," which "was exclusively reserved to Russian subjects from the Behring Straits to 51° N. latitude." But such language appeared to prelude an extension of the policy of the Holy Alliance to include the Northern as well as the Southern continent of the Americas in a system of monarchical aggression underwritten by this "Pact of Kings." The vast empty territory threatened by the encroachments of Russian Imperialism was held in a sort of "joint occupancy" by Great Britain and the United States under the terms of a convention signed in October, 1818 (which left the definition of a future boundary to future arbitration). This might have relieved Monroe from much anxiety respecting the abilities of Alexander to make good his claim, except for one unfortunate fact. It was the terms of this friendly and sensible agreement that Adams had chosen as his favorite subject of difference with the equally cantankerous British Minister. Concerning the trivial matter of the sending of an American war vessel to the mouth of the Columbia, Stratford Canning complained he had "been treated like a school-boy." He had answered Adams with a tone "more peremptory" than the latter "was disposed to endure." The British Envoy had been badgered into

JAMES MONROE

some foolish statements about "a very close alliance" that bound the interests of his country with those of Russia and Spain, while the Secretary of State "took strong exception to the form and substance of *all* that had been said." The level-headed Monroe judged rightly that the controversy was not a serious one. Moreover, the Tsar's policy of "international organization" was now furnishing the two Anglo-Saxon Powers with a whole series of common grievances — if not of common accords. When the plans of the Holy Alliance culminated in the French intervention to restore Ferdinand of Spain to absolute power in spite of the constitution he had sworn to defend, and when this Royalist crusade actually threatened to extend its "beneficent action" by sending an armada to "crush out revolution" in the "New World," the two great "Constitutional Powers" found themselves allies through the logical force of events.

In March, 1823, Canning served an ultimatum on the French Foreign Office. It was not, however, until the following June that the United States, through the medium of the Secretary of State, was brought to the point of favoring some form of coöperation with England. "This," Adams declared, "must be distinctly not . . . an alliance." But the way was open in both countries to a stronger stand respecting the rapidly developing crisis threatening the "young liberties" of South America.

The reasons that lay at the bottom of Mr. Adams's

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

change of attitude toward Great Britain were developed in the course of a long interview with Stratford Canning. "The European alliance," he believed, "was virtually dissolved. . . . He meant to say . . . dissolved as far as Great Britain was a party to it." "She avowed the principles which were emphatically those of this country, and she disapproved the principles which this country abhorred." In view of this "coincidence of principles," he was willing "to compare their ideas and purposes together" — in other words, to adopt the attitude which the President had favored nearly three years before. In the interest of international courtesy, Adams recalled that if the policy of the United States "had been to keep aloof from the European System of politics," this had been "Europe's policy toward us." The interview now took on an accustomed tone of high repartee. But in the end, these two diplomats, both "stubborn and punctilious, with a disposition to be overbearing," parted from each other in good humor, each convinced that he had scored in a farewell exchange of sarcastic civilities. Stratford Canning departed for England leaving Mr. Addington as *Chargé d'Affaires*.

The return of Mr. Stratford Canning to London coincides with the series of negotiations which his cousin, the Foreign Minister, now entered upon with Mr. Rush. On both sides of the Atlantic, the courses of foreign policy continued to converge. Instructions

JAMES MONROE

dated the 27th of June (the date of the Adams-Canning interview) informed the American Minister to the Court of Saint James's, that a "joint negotiation" was contemplated with respect to the conflicting claims of Russia on the one hand, and the United States and Great Britain on the other.

The rumor of possible common action between Great Britain and the United States was especially disturbing to Baron de Tuyl, the new Russian Minister. He had been sent to the United States to urge upon President Monroe the merits of the Tsar's "Holy League" before that "High Adventure" had developed its later policy of constitutional repression. He had at one time hoped that American differences with the mother country (a family quarrel invariably misunderstood by foreigners) might be exploited to the extent of offsetting England's defection from the "common cause of Europe." The "Ukase of 1821" had been a peculiarly unfortunate obstacle to the success of his mission. He was sensible that in the United States as in England the aureole of Liberalism was fast fading from the august head of the "Tsar-Idealist." He complained to Mr. Adams (who hated newspapers in general) that the comment of certain American journalists would be "annoying" to Alexander. "He said the Emperor entered much into the spirit of the age, and was solicitous to stand fair in public opinion." The Secretary of State (secretly confident of his ability "to meet the Russian argu-

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

ments," less so of preparedness "to answer the Russian cannon") promised "to prepare a paragraph on the subject." But soon after Stratford Canning departed, when Tuyl came to inquire for news regarding the negotiations that England and the United States now proposed to pursue in common respecting the Tsar's pretensions in the Pacific, he was met with a startling intimation of a complete change in the attitude of the Department of State. Adams informed him that the United States "would now contest the right of Russia to any territorial establishment," and that "the American continents are no longer subjects for any new European colonial establishments." The Secretary of State was not only prepared to draw all possible advantage from the new *entente*, but even to assert principles unacceptable to its most powerful member.

Monroe's fears respecting the motives underlying the Tsar's Ukase were complicated by a second difference with Russia. The insurgent subjects of the Sultan had appealed to the President for "recognition and protection." Alexander's devotion to the cause of concerted action in Europe had actually led him (under Metternich's hateful influence) to the extreme of proposing that the Powers of the "Holy Alliance" should join in coercive measures to meet the "pretensions" of Greek patriots. The relations of Russia with the Porte had been made the subject of a *mémoire* and communicated to Adams. Even the

JAMES MONROE

Secretary of State's respectful attitude toward Alexander's "League" and the strange methods adopted by that combination for "the maintenance of universal peace" had its limits. This further attempt to drag from the American Cabinet some expression of sympathy with the purposes of the "Sublime Idea" — at the very moment when their policy was taking a trend most obnoxious to American opinion — warned both Adams and his Chief of the futility of continued "half-measures." The issue was clearly drawn. The choice lay between a more or less open expression of sympathy with Great Britain's principle of "non-intervention," or with the reactionary policy of the "Continental Powers." Beneath the vague protestations of general principles by this "righteous and pure-hearted league . . . for the maintenance of justice, of good-understanding,"¹ now appeared their determination to stamp out the spread of "constitutional government" in Europe and America.

VI

THE foreign situation was becoming tense. The heat of the Washington summer, added to the excitement of the crisis, was too much for the President. On the 2d of August, he was seized with "cramps or convulsions of such extreme violence that it was thought he was dying" (*sic*). Mr. Adams grew even more energetic by comparison. "Swam in the Poto-

¹ J. Q. Adams.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

mac to the bridge against the tide," he writes jubilantly in his "Diary." "One hour and fifty minutes in the water, Antoine being still at hand with the canoe." "At the President's, he received me in his bedchamber which he is advised not to leave. He recommended me to strike from the instructions to Mr. Middleton . . . all the references to the Holy Alliance because that Treaty was considered in this country as 'a mere hypocritical fraud.'" Mr. Adams was still inclined, if not to fear, at least to respect the European group of which the Tsar was the moving spirit. Yet even on his sick-bed the President's firmness prevailed. Although Mr. Adams fumed over "newspaper scavengers" and "scape gibbets," he struck out the offending paragraph, not without considerable lament over "the mainspring of my argument to the Emperor."

A few weeks later it was the turn of Mr. Monroe and the Cabinet to be alarmed. "The news that Cadiz has surrendered to the French has so affected the President that he appeared entirely to despair of the cause of South America," Adams wrote; "Mr. Calhoun was moonstruck about it." Meanwhile the organs of the Opposition, "whose republicanism runs in filthy streams from the press," were hammering the Administration for their lack of courage in the Grecian cause. Mr. Gallatin was writing from Paris to urge that the naval forces in the Mediterranean, "one frigate, one corvette, and a schooner,"

JAMES MONROE

be used in their aid. "Enthusiasm for the Greeks," wrote the Diarist, "is all sentiment. As for action they are seldom agreed." A Minister accredited to the insurgents was urged; then a "secret agent." But, said Mr. Adams, "*Our* agents never will be secret."

The departure of Mr. Adams to visit his family in New England offered the President an opportunity to resume a more personal control of foreign affairs. In the absence of the Secretary of State at Quincy, a series of important dispatches arrived from the American Minister to the Court of Saint James's. Rush reported that England considered the "recovery of the colonies by Spain to be hopeless." Believing the question of their recognition "was one of time and circumstance," Minister Canning was now prepared to make a "concurrent" declaration with the United States to the effect "that neither Power aimed at the possession of any portion of the colonies," nor could "see the transfer of any portion of them to any other Power with indifference." Here at last was an offer of an acceptable nature; an offer such as Monroe had contemplated making to Great Britain early in his first Administration (when in other circumstances the downright Mr. Adams had characterized it as "crude").

Monroe had been present as the youngest member of the Congress that had listened to Washington's moving "Farewell Address." He shared the opinion

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

of most of his fellow countrymen concerning this legacy of traditional policy. None was more inclined to reverence its admonitions regarding "foreign entanglements." But the present juncture of affairs seemed to create a new necessity. As the President now wrote to Jefferson, Canning, "in suggesting designs of the holy alliance against the Independence of So. America" (even Mr. Monroe's use of capitals seems to suggest his political feelings), had aimed only "at a mere expression of opinion." "However abstract" such a common policy might seem, it was, he believed, sufficient to defeat the "combination" now dreaded in both countries. Monroe insisted, moreover, that the policy suggested was his own. "Has not the time arrived," he inquired, "when Great Britain must take her stand either on the side of the monarchs of Europe or of the U. States?"

In communicating the matter to the "Elder Statesmen," he asked their opinion on the subject. The replies of both Jefferson and Madison were in accord with his own views. Jefferson observed the matter to be "the most momentous since our declaration of independence. *That* made us a nation. *This* sets our compass and points our course through the ocean of time opening on us." The ex-President repeated his conviction that "our first and fundamental maxim should be not to entangle ourselves in the broils of Europe." "The present occasion was auspicious," he believed, to formulate a second cardinal principle

JAMES MONROE

of Americanism: "Never to suffer Europe to intermeddle with cis-Atlantic affairs." In parenthesis he pointed out that, with Great Britain "on our side, we need not fear the whole world." He opposed purchasing this unity "by taking part in her wars," but in the present case hostile action that might result "is not her war, but ours."

Ex-President Madison replied in the same tone, with a mild suggestion that Greece and the French invasion of Spain should be included in the "eventual" policy proposed, a contradiction in terms which was to form the matter of future debate in the Cabinet. Both these replies, amplifying the ground that Monroe had taken in his own covering dispatch, satisfied the President that the policy he had so long desired to pursue toward Great Britain met with the approval of the leaders of his party. The "ancestral voices" of Republicanism had spoken in favor of the *entente* with the mother country.

At the first Cabinet meeting attended by Adams after his return (November 7th), the matter of the Rush proposals was discussed. "There was much conversation," reports Adams, "without coming to any definite point." The old fears regarding British designs on Cuba and Texas were revived. Calhoun was "inclined to give discretionary power to Mr. Rush" and to obtain a mutual "self-denying" declaration from Canning. Monroe was averse to taking a position which might appear "subordinate to Great

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

Britain." Adams supported the President's views with an apt simile. He objected to coming in "as a cock-boat in the wake of a British man-of-war." The epigram if not the idea was "acquiesced in on all sides."

To Monroe, Adams's willingness fully to support his own views of the Rush negotiations seems to have been a matter open to doubt. As shown by the latter's "Diary," he did not at first reveal Jefferson's decisive answer and the proposed new Manifesto. But to understand Adams's attitude at this time, it is necessary to consider that he was wholly engrossed by a matter directly within his own province: the subject of a suitable reply to another somewhat embarrassing communication from Baron de Tuyl. The Tsar's representative had (on October 16th) favored the State Department with a veritable "lecture" on the benefits of legitimacy and the duties of the Powers concerning South America. As great American Powers, Spain and Russia were not to be denied certain rights in their policy overseas. But rumors of a Congress to legislate concerning the American colonies were now abroad. Although the Presidential Messages of 1821 and 1822 had suggested the possibility of common action with the European Powers concerning South America, Monroe — with the full support of Calhoun and Adams — now believed that the refusal of the United States to attend any Congress, or to "join in common action with the

JAMES MONROE

Holy Alliance," "should be explicit and unqualified."

Adams — as usual when his mind was fully made up — was even too "explicit." He spoke of the "tainted atmosphere" of these "European gatherings" as "unfit for Americans to breathe." The tone of a dispatch he had drafted to the Russian Foreign Office was the source of a long Cabinet discussion. Referring to the Tsar's refusal to receive a Colombian Minister, the Secretary of State had spoken "of the duty of independent Christian nations to entertain with each other those friendly relations which sentiments of humanity and their mutual interests required."¹ Calhoun objected to these words as "sarcastic." Adams "told him that they were intended to put the Emperor in the wrong." But the Cabinet and Monroe were out of sympathy with this view. The meeting broke up without coming to any conclusion, but the President and Adams had some constructive private talk concerning the necessity of coördinating their negotiations.

On the 13th, Adams still found Monroe "yet altogether undecided in his own mind as to the answer to be given to Mr. Canning's proposals." Calhoun had "stimulated" his panic "that the Holy Alliance might restore immediately all South America to Spain." Adams told his Chief that if he would "decide either to accept or decline" he would "draft a dispatch conformable to either decision." The good-natured

¹ Ford.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

President was considerably mollified by this attitude.

On the 15th, Adams was at last informed of Monroe's correspondence with Jefferson and Madison and the policy evolved. He maintained his opinion that "Great Britain is impelled more by her interest than by a principle of general liberty." The energetic Secretary of State now believed that to restore Spanish dominion was no more possible than "that Chimborazo will sink beneath the ocean," and ascribed the President's hesitations to "Calhoun's extravaganzas." To Canning's proposals of a "hand-in-hand" policy regarding the new Southern Republics, he would "establish a test of right and wrong." "As independent nations they themselves and no other nation had the right to dispose of their condition." This brought the whole question to an issue. Coöperation with Great Britain must depend upon the latter's consent formally to recognize the independence of Colombia and Venezuela. This was the attitude assumed from the beginning by Rush in London — when that able diplomat had first been confronted with the dilemma of avoiding an independent decision.

VII

THE matters that suddenly confronted Monroe's Cabinet, in November, 1823, and the details of the long and careful debates concerning the Presidential Message of December 2d, are set down with meticulous care by Adams. This often astonishingly candid

JAMES MONROE

record reveals the part that each member of the Administration took in its elaboration. Adams's "Diary" is not only one of the neglected masterpieces of American literature but also the major source for the history of his time.

In considering Adams's full reports of the Cabinet meetings from 1817 to 1824, at which the succeeding Messages of the Monroe Administration were in turn discussed and evolved, one fact becomes strikingly evident: the President's determination that these important communications of the Executive to Congress should represent a fair consensus of the opinions of all his official advisers. The original draft of each of these documents was written by the President himself and submitted "paragraph by paragraph" to the assembled heads of the Departments. If objections were made, they were considered either in a new draft by Monroe, or, as more generally occurred, the papers were referred to the heads of the Departments for revision and further consideration. It does not appear to have been his custom — the point is important in view of recent controversies — to submit these "paragraphs" to the Secretaries chiefly concerned until they had been submitted to the general criticism of the Cabinet.

Thus, in their turn, Monroe's Messages focused the combined wisdom of the President and his official advisers. That the famous Message of December, 1823, formulating the Monroe Doctrine, followed this

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

process of amendment and criticism can hardly be doubted by any one reading Adams's own accounts. In these discussions nearly every member of the Cabinet took part. Nowhere does Adams claim for himself a more preponderating share in the preparation of this decisive document than would naturally fall to a conscientious Secretary of State during a debate upon Foreign Affairs.

What, then, was Adams's principal contribution to the development of the Monroe Doctrine? In the field of constructive criticism he was invaluable. To the President's classical enthusiasm for the Greek insurgents he opposed the coldly logical — and undeniable — objection that such a course of action would lead to a marked departure from the line of conduct defined by Washington: non-interference with European affairs. Even before Monroe had confided to him the tenor of his correspondence with the ex-President, he had assumed the same ground as had the "Sage of Monticello." He recognized that the "hand-in-hand" policy advocated by Canning was the only possible basis for an effectual protest against the aggressions of the Holy Alliance, yet he accepted this necessity grudgingly. His determination to avoid any semblance of a closer "alliance" was again and again manifest, and may well have determined the policy of the Cabinet in this respect. He certainly initiated the courageous verbal ultimatum to Baron de Tuyl, embodied in the important "Non-coloniza-

JAMES MONROE

tion" clause. Otherwise revision, rather than authorship, defines his rôle throughout.

Monroe viewed the crisis with all a soldier's instinct for the possible outcome of the armed intervention by the French in Spanish affairs. In the event of a sudden move (such as a determination of the Powers of the Holy Alliance to transfer the field of their Royalist adventure to South America), he realized that to make effective the desires of Great Britain and the United States a military alliance was the only possible solution. This fact probably explains the determination with which he at first sought to confer upon Richard Rush (in whose capable hands the whole negotiation actually lay) full powers to decide the extent of American participation in any eventual protest-in-arms.

Monroe recognized the difficulties of Rush's position. He was the potential hero of any decisive moment that might arise. He had so far loyally deferred all actual commitment and with consummate diplomatic skill had succeeded in postponing the question of an "alliance" with Great Britain, or action that might "now or hereafter implicate us in the federative system of Europe." Yet, as Monroe and Adams were aware, he was not a man to shrink from any legitimate responsibility. Had the British Foreign Minister's protests to Prince Polignac respecting the interference of the Continental Powers in South American concerns been neglected, Rush had been prepared to

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

act: "As I had often made known to Lord Castle-reagh," he writes, "I would not scruple on seeing that important event come about, to lend my official name to the course proposed, and count upon my Government stamping with its subsequent official approval the part which I acted."

Adams, not unnaturally, desired to keep in his own hands the threads of the negotiation. He distrusted, not Rush's ability, but his lack of diplomatic experience. If any "plenipotentiary" were to decide the future course of the United States in the threatening world crisis, he preferred the aged and more temporizing Madison. Faced on his return from Quincy with a state of affairs which had already developed far beyond his desires, he was "utterly averse" to the project favored by the President and Calhoun: an agent empowered "to act jointly with the British Government in case of any sudden emergency of danger." He insisted that the "instructions should be specific." Adams gained his point. The emergency did not arise, and it is idle to speculate upon the possible military complications that the course he insisted upon might have entailed.

At a Cabinet meeting on the 18th, there was much further discussion of a proposal favored by the President to send "a Minister to France and an Envoy Extraordinary as a colleague with R. Rush in the negotiation now committed to him alone." Many persons were mentioned for these missions and "their

JAMES MONROE

character and qualifications discussed." One was objected to on account of his "rheumatism, his fortune, and his showy wife"; another on account of his Federalism. Adams again favored Madison. The President was at this time in "such an extraordinary state of dejection" that Adams believed "there must be something that affects him besides the European news." The absence of Wirt, the able if legalistic Attorney-General, and the illness of the politically minded Crawford (the most determined among the candidates for Monroe's succession) reduced the Cabinet to three members and increased their responsibility.

Adams could well believe he had, so far, controlled the course of events. He was in a high state of spirits. Addington, the British Chargé, was welcomed "with profuse cordiality" at the State Department. "He spoke loftily," the latter wrote,¹ "of the announcement made to Russia" of the intention of "his country to oppose any future attempt at colonizing North or South America," adding (in view of possible complications) that "this attitude was more especially directed against Russia." When Addington pressed for a speedy decision regarding the British proposals, he replied that on account of "its paramount consequence" the President was anxious to give the matter "the most deliberate consideration."

¹ Reddaway.

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

VIII

DURING five days — from the 21st to the 26th of November, 1823 (with the customary Sunday observance) — the Cabinet was in almost a continual session. The long reports in Adams's "Diary" indicate the sense of responsibility that oppressed Monroe and his advisers. The possible consequences of the "stand" which they contemplated were obvious to all. It was, as Adams expressed it, "a fearful question." To act separately from Great Britain would lead them to affront alone the whole "System of Europe," whose ability to drive home a direct attack on "popular principles" had just been triumphantly vindicated in Spain. Yet, as all finally agreed, to be hurried into a premature alliance with the mother country was an equally deplorable alternative.

None of the negotiations (either with Great Britain or with Russia) were known outside of the inner circles of the Administration. Popular opinion generally believed that an "Era of Good Feelings" still beneficently obtained, at least in foreign affairs. Adams told Monroe "the whole situation" would come upon them "like a clap of thunder." The public knew nothing of the private history of the Tsar's attempt at Aix-la-Chapelle to obtain European support for the pretensions of the King of Spain in America. But as the Cabinet were aware (through Camp-

JAMES MONROE

bell's dispatches from St. Petersburg), Russia at that time had been ready to support "a warlike policy" with twelve ships of the line. Only the defection of Great Britain from the "European System" had prevented the sailing of an armada of Legitimacy to the shores of the American continent.

It was still largely upon Great Britain and her navy that the United States must depend in order to make good her liberal protest. And as Monroe clearly recognized, Great Britain was "in a dilemma." Her "dread of internal reformers" made her sympathize with the Holy Alliance. His chief adviser still believed it was the commercial interest of Great Britain in South America, not her sympathy with American liberties, "that dictated Canning's attitude."

Nor were Adams's suggestions always constructive. The Secretary developed a tendency to bewail our lost isolation. He was even prepared to regret the generous impulses that had led to recognition of Colombia and the Republic of La Plata: "If the Holy Alliance really intended to restore by force the Colonies of Spain, it was questionable whether we had not been over-hasty in acknowledging South American independence." He somewhat plaintively recalled that "At the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle the Allies had discussed what they should do" — "and we had not thought of interfering with them." At one moment he seemed to advocate a somewhat Machiavellian

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

solution which would have made the legislative branch responsible for any "defiance" of Europe. "It was infinitely better that the impulse should come from Congress rather than it should go from the Executive. Foreign Powers were apt to take less notice of them than of Executive measures."

Adams kept clearly before the Cabinet, however, the difference between the *practical* issue — that of South American independence — and the *sentimental* issues involved in the popular sympathy for the cause of the Greeks: "The ground I wish to take is that of earnest remonstrance against the interference of the European Powers by force with South America, but to disclaim all interference on our part with Europe; to make an American cause and to adhere inflexibly to that." The harmony of all the final Cabinet discussions which resulted in the formulation of the Monroe Doctrine was marred by Adams's characteristic predilection for hair-splitting arguments — and a somewhat illogical desire to sermonize the Tsar.

In the latter self-imposed task he was opposed by all the other members of the Administration. The general terms of the Message had been agreed upon; the question of the answer to be made to Alexander appeared one of form to all except the Secretary of State. His attitude included a somewhat superior (and intensely irritating) assumption of "understanding the Tsar." The true significance of the latter's

JAMES MONROE

attempt to redeem Europe by an application of the "principles which the Divine Saviour had taught to mankind," he intimated, had escaped the other members of the Cabinet. He believed that "the Emperor Alexander was honestly wedded to his system; that he was profoundly penetrated with the conviction that he was laboring for the good of his people and for the welfare of mankind. . . . There was no man living more sensitive to public opinion, as I knew from a multitude of proofs." Alexander's apologist even implied a degree of intimacy between himself and that monarch and a certain "personal attachment" dating from his residence as American Minister in St. Petersburg.

Yet in spite of this friendly disposition to the author of the Holy Alliance, Adams could not resist his natural inclination to admonish. Wirt and Calhoun were both in doubt regarding the Holy Alliance, but not as to the expediency of sending "Adams's draft" to Russia. "The hornet of a paragraph" was the way a part of this communication was described by the Attorney-General. Adams replied that these objections touched "the cream of his paper." Wirt spoke of the danger of "assuming an attitude of menace without meaning to strike." "What," he inquired, "were Mr. Adams's intentions if the Allies should act in direct hostility to South America?" — "Would the country oppose them by war?" The Executive, he believed, was "certainly committed by

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

the terms" of the suggested draft. "Would the people and Congress support them in such a step?" The argument was unanswerable.

Reading between the lines of Adams's long account of the Russian incident and its final outcome, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Monroe's understanding of the former's talents and shortcomings was perfect. With respect to the general policy to be pursued (that is, a limited participation in the policy adopted by Canning toward the Holy Alliance and a firm attitude toward the Tsar of Russia) all the members of the Administration were now in accord. This spirit of agreement which the President had sought from the beginning to secure was now threatened. Monroe's first instructions directed "the omission of all the paragraphs to which objection had been made by members of the Cabinet." He admitted that a "peculiar responsibility lay upon" Adams for the "tone of the paper," but at the same time maintained "that the crisis was a great one." All Monroe's efforts were directed against the rhetorical dangers to which the "Adams manner" was ready to subject his Administration. The soundness of the fundamental position assumed by the Secretary of State was no longer questioned, yet there was a general indisposition on the part of the whole Cabinet "to an ostentatious display of republican contrasted to monarchical principles." The justice of this criticism was finally admitted by Adams himself.

JAMES MONROE

The outcome affords an amusing example of Adams's congenital characteristics. Having gained his point, he was willing to yield. On the 27th, the President again directed him to omit from his note to Tuyl "all the paragraphs to which objection had been made." While Monroe subsequently modified this decision (as Adams reports) "on account of the importance I attached to it," the final communication was read to the Russian Ambassador, "omitting the contested paragraphs."

IX

THE Presidential Message to Congress embodying the widely separated paragraphs that have since grown famous under the name of the "Monroe Doctrine" was dated December 2, 1823. There was a curious lack of climax to this long-considered act. The Powers of the Holy Alliance showed none of the spirit of bellicose resentment that the Cabinet had feared (although Adams, in a conversation with Clay, still considered that "a war for South American independence might be inevitable"). In spite of the fact that the British Cabinet had not been consulted, the comment of the English press and Parliament was generally favorable. The crisis passed, and a certain relief became apparent on the part of Monroe that he need not act in accordance with his heroic gesture. Further "defiance of Europe" was left to the ready orators of Congress. The closing days of the "Era

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

of Good Feelings" were spared even the rumors of wars.

The principles set forth in his great Manifesto of Americanism were, however, too timely, and resumed too skillfully a traditional attitude, not to have an early practical application. In 1826, Daniel Webster's admired oratory gave it a place among the Nation's "treasures." He expressed his intention of "guarding it neither blurred nor blotted." From the beginning its binding force was generally and enthusiastically recognized.

As the recollection of the anxious debates that had accompanied the evolution of the "Doctrine" faded away, Monroe seems to have put the matter from his mind. It is probable, as his biographer observes, he "had but little conception of the lasting effect his words would produce."¹ A few weeks later he retired from office, and the seven remaining years of his life were passed in the dignified retirement that he considered "incumbent upon any man who had been honored with the Presidency." There was on the part of its author no further gloss or comment concerning his outstanding contribution to the foreign policy of his country.

Monroe in his retirement turned his attention to the "Memoirs" that seem inevitably to obsess the quondam diplomat. With a certain pathetic insistence he desired to resume the task of "vindicating"

¹ Gilman.

JAMES MONROE

his earlier unsuccessful and nearly forgotten missions to France and Great Britain. Like his first unfortunate literary venture, the work he planned was weighed down with a quaintly forbidding title: "A Biographical and Historical Review of the Great Events to which Mr. Monroe was a party, and of which he was a spectator in the course of his Public Service." But Monroe had found authorship an expensive avocation in more ways than one. Before embarking on a second venture, he tentatively consulted his friends.

It is gratifying to note that one of the motives he advanced for writing these "Memoirs" was a desire to reconsider the harshly polemical treatment of his differences with Washington that had marred his earlier work. These matters and "new documents referring to my second mission to France," he somewhat wistfully wrote, "could not fail to be very interesting." It is to be regretted that his advisers gave him so little encouragement. His literary intentions were, in consequence, only partially carried out. Ample leisure resulted, however, in an imposing mass of "Monroe Papers," and in a manuscript, "Comparison of the American Republic with those of Greece and Rome," which, in spite of its classical appeal to the taste of the time, was also coldly viewed by the candid critics on whom he relied.

There is reason to believe that Monroe's personal character ("a soul" which Jefferson said "might be

DIPLOMATIC PORTRAITS

turned inside out without revealing a blemish to the world") was more highly considered by his contemporaries than his attainments. Calhoun described him as possessed of "none of those qualities that dazzle mankind," although praising "a discretion which seldom committed a mistake." He was perhaps unduly sensitive to what a member of his intimate circle called "a lack of general culture necessary for shining." Yet his partiality for the "plainest, simplest language" seems to hold forth reasons for regretting that his biographical projects were only partially fulfilled. The taste of his time inclined to a "wealth of classical allusion" and a pedantic parade of learning (of the kind that mars the style of Adams, except when he relapses into the racy intimacies of the "Diary"). The very faults which his friends deplored in Monroe's unadorned prose would probably have saved him from the faults of his generation. He was (it may again be observed) a man of our own time rather than of his own. To this trait may, in a measure, be due the enduring significance of his "Doctrine."

A characteristic aftermath of his diplomatic career was the poverty to which he was reduced through a long-deferred settlement by Congress of his claim to be reimbursed for money expended in supporting his country's credit abroad. Such relief as the politicians were inclined to offer he refused. He would make no account adapted to the act which fell far short of

JAMES MONROE

making just reparation. He preferred to lose "the whole sum rather than to accept less than was properly due." It is not pleasant to read that, in the absence of any "popular subscription," he was forced at one time to depend on Lafayette for aid.

This state of affairs resulted, after Mrs. Monroe's death, in the sale of his beloved Virginia estate "Oak Hill." He retired in semi-exile to New York, to live near his daughter, Mrs. Gouverneur. His house (sadly dilapidated and given over to the basest uses) still stands — a mute reproach to the uncertain gratitude of the Great Republic. Yet, even under the stress of undeserved privation, he kept the unassuming tone of quiet superiority that befitted his station. There was nothing of the "clamorous claimant" in his attitude toward Congress — rather he treated their attempts at cheese-paring compromise with the contempt they deserved. He scorned their doles and preserved his dignity. Till the end he remained (as his faithful friend John Quincy Adams wrote in a final "Eulogy") "Of a mind anxious and unwearied in the pursuit of truth and right, patient of inquiry, patient of contradiction, courteous even in the collision of sentiments, sound in its ultimate judgments, and firm in its final conclusions." He died on the significant date of July 4, 1831.

THE END

THE HOLY ALLIANCE

The European Background of the Monroe Doctrine

By W. P. CRESSON, PH.D.

(Published by the Oxford University Press, New York, and since included in the Carnegie Endowment's celebrated series of standard works on Diplomatic History.)

THE author took the occasion of a diplomatic appointment to the Russian Court before the war to investigate at first hand the state papers of over a century ago, whereby he is enabled to present well-known historical facts from a new and illuminating viewpoint.

The diplomacy of the post-Napoleonic period is accurately described, and the hopes and ambitions of the various European rulers and statesmen are set forth with great discernment. The character of the Tsar Alexander I is particularly well presented; and there has been no more thorough all-round analysis of his "Holy Alliance of Justice, Christian Charity and Peace" in its relation to the Monroe Doctrine.

DR. MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN, in a full-page review in the *New York Times*, says:

"No book, however, has so fully presented the character of Alexander I and its effect on the policy of the European powers, or the intimate and enlightening details which were hidden until Dr. Cresson, at that time Secretary of the American Embassy in Petrograd, was enabled to examine the hidden documents relating to America in the imperial archives."

"This book of Dr. Cresson's has a decided historical value. It is interesting, well written, and contains some important new material which the author collected while in Russia. New proofs are given that strengthen our conviction that our former appreciation of the history and meaning of the Holy Alliance was a sound one. There also can be found in the book of Dr. Cresson some very interesting parallels with the Versailles transactions. Alexander was 'bafoué' and hampered, at his own confession, by his reactionary surroundings; and the result was exactly the same one as in 1919, a great discouragement and disenchantment." — *The American Journal of International Law*.

"A most scholarly exposition of forces and events in Europe which contributed to the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine. Mr. Cresson shows the result of his access to and study of data in the Russian Government archives which had hitherto been unavailable. He gives a most interesting picture of Tsar Alexander of Russia, showing how training, associations, and circumstances influenced his point of view and actions. An admirable account is given by him of the Tsar's efforts to establish a permanent 'League for Peace' which finally resulted in the formation of the abortive Holy Alliance; of other events leading to the formation of that alliance, and also of the political activities of the respective European Powers which had such a bearing on the counter policy adopted by the Government of the United States and announced by President Monroe. Dr. Cresson has made a genuine contribution to the history of the epoch covered." — *New York Evening Post*.

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 09774 278 5

